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OUR NARRATIVE.

1897-1898.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL E. C. SIM.

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OUR NARRATIVE.

1897—1898.

BY
MAJOR-GENERAL E. C. SIM.

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P R E F A C E.

IN publishing this short account of our latest wanderings in the East, I would remark that it was written for the amusement of friends and brother-officers, and I offer it to them with all good wishes for the year 1899.

E. C. SIM,

Major-General.

LONDON,

December, 1898.

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OUR NARRATIVE.



I.

EGYPT.

HAVING decided to spend the winter and early spring abroad, we—that is to say my wife, daughter, and self—after much negotiation with Cook and Son, and many steamship companies, booked our berths in the new steamship *Tamba Maru*, belonging to the Japanese Company the “Nippon-Yusen-Kaisha,” who have lately started a line to Europe. They have been a great factor in Japan and China for many years, and we had a comfortable voyage in one of their boats from Tientsin, in China, to Kobe in 1893.

We made our arrangements to reach Egypt at the beginning of December, before the rush of the season, when the Nile steamers are very much overcrowded.

We left our flat in Westminster on a cold bright morning, November 27th, and crossed Westminster Bridge as Big Ben was striking nine. We found special carriages attached

to the 9.30 train from Waterloo for Southampton, and everything was favourable except that my watch stopped at the moment of leaving the Metropolis. The only thing to do was to have a "Waterbury" forwarded to me in Egypt by post, which my son undertook to do ; but, owing to our erratic movements, it never reached me till we arrived in Ceylon, having just missed us in Singapore by a few hours.

My son accompanied us down Southampton Water in the tender to where our steamer, called by my friends the *Tambour Major*, was lying off Netley Hospital, having come in from Antwerp earlier in the day. We quickly stowed away our passengers, numbering about fifty, with their baggage, and at 1 P.M. the tender left us, and we were soon steaming past the Needles and Hurst Castle, where we dropped our pilot.

We had most delightful weather the whole way through the Bay and down the Spanish coast, although at that very time there was the worst gale experienced for years raging in the English Channel. We were close enough to the coast of Spain and Portugal to distinguish the main features of the country, and to remind us of Wellington and the battles in the Peninsular War—Corunna, Vimiera, Abrantes, the Convention of Cintra, and the advantages of Lisbon as a base of operations. The coast is well-lighted, and parts of it wooded and picturesque.

Off Capes St. Vincent and Trafalgar visions of battleships

and the immortal Nelson crowd upon the imagination, and it is easier to grasp the whole circumstances after having passed those historic points. We went close to Tarifa, an old Moorish town and fort, so ably defended by Sir Charles Felix Smith, R.E., against the French during the Peninsular War. We made Gibraltar at 6 P.M. on November 30th, the "Rock" looking grand in the setting sun, and Europa Point, with its fine lighthouse, was well visible. We thought of our friends and relations in that splendid garrison, now augmented by a battalion of the Guards.

In due course we passed Malta, Tunis, and the ancient Carthage, and on December 3rd we experienced our first bad weather. The wind shifted ahead, the waves got up, and our good ship began to pitch and roll in a very lively fashion. Most of the passengers disappeared down below, or rather up above, as the cabins on board were all on the promenade deck, and in the worst part of the storm there was some difficulty in getting to and from the cabins on the windward side. The captain comforted us with the information that it always blows in those parts, and it is certain to be rough, because all the waters of the Adriatic, the Levant, and the big Bight of Tripoli meet just there, and it is technically known as "the sink."

The only damage we suffered was the total destruction of one of the companions, leading from the main to the promenade deck, being caught by a side wave which broke

clean over the vessel, and we had to lay to for a short time while the crew were making fast the floating wreckage, which threatened to carry away the ventilators on the lower deck. We all thought that our steering-gear had broken down, but fortunately nothing of that kind occurred, and the ship and engines behaved splendidly. We had two days more or less discomfort, and during the heaviest part of the blow we only made 162 miles in the day.

We made Boorlos Light, near Damietta, about midnight, ran inside the breakwater at Port Said at 8 A.M. on December 8th, and were soon made fast in the Canal preparatory to coaling. A large yacht, the *Victoria*, badly handled by one of the Canal pilots, scraped herself all across our bows in trying to pick up her buoy, and must have damaged her paint considerably.

We paid £105 for our three passages through to Singapore, being allowed to stay six weeks in Egypt, picking up the next steamer, and with the right to return by the same line for 20 per cent. less than the fare, about £84, which is quite £25 less than the usual charge by mail steamer. Thus we considered we had saved £75, which was spent in Cook's steamer tickets from Cairo to Assouan and back.

We made a great effort to catch the 9 A.M. train to Cairo, so we took leave of Captain Barnes, the officers, and the Japanese purser, whom we had known in Japan in 1893, and hurried off under the care of a capital interpreter to the

Custom House to pass our rather bulky baggage. There, however, the officials were so leisurely over the examination that we had to resign ourselves to spending the day in Port Said and going on by the afternoon train.

We lunched at the Continental Hotel, and met there the English Commander of an Egyptian coastguard cruiser, who told us a good deal about the life of the place. We drove to the Strangford Hospital, of which my friend Sir John Stokes is chairman ; it does good service both for natives and invalid Europeans. We called on Mr. Royle, one of the most influential residents, and a charming man ; we also made the acquaintance of Mr. Macdonald, of the great firm of Worms and Co., agent of the Japanese Company.

We found Port Said not so bad as we had been led to believe, and much has been done lately for its sanitation. Some of the shops, particularly the Eastern Exchange, are very good, but the prices high.

We left by the 3.40 P.M. train for Cairo, and the railway as far as Ismailia follows the Canal very closely ; it is a narrow guage one, and belongs to the Company. They professedly give you time for dinner at Ismailia, but as our train was late we only had a quarter of an hour to get through a lengthy *menu*, and the waiting was so slow that we finally had to seize as many rolls as we could and make a dash for the main line train, which was just signalled away.

By this time it was quite dark and getting very cold ; the

carriage we were in was very badly lighted and extremely dirty, so we had a very tedious three hours' journey across the moonlit desert, the only break in the monotony being at Zag-a-zig, which is an important manufacturing centre and brilliant with electric lights.

We reached Cairo at 10.30 P.M., very tired, and sleepy, and found a comfortable 'bus and good hotel porters to take charge of our luggage. The long drive to the Ghezireh Palace Hotel took us through the residential part of the town, the fine houses looking most imposing in the moonlight. At last we crossed the Kasr-el-Nil bridge, and were soon descending at the hotel door, glad to get to our journey's end.

My impressions of the city during the drive from the station were far more pleasing than when I last visited it during the hottest part of August in 1868, on my way to China.

We found the hotel very comfortable, and they gave us palatial rooms opening on to a wide piazza overlooking the river, with its picturesque native boats constantly passing up and down. Most of the place was built by Ismail Pasha at the opening of the Suez Canal, and the decorations are on a gorgeous scale. The chief reception rooms are now used as dining and drawing-rooms, and the *cuisine* is first class.

To save the long drive into the city by the Kasr-el-Nil

bridge, there is a steam ferry running constantly from the hotel garden to the opposite bank of the river, where an electric tram starts for the town every few minutes. A piastre is the ordinary charge on all the tramcars, which is about $2\frac{1}{2}d.$, as 100 piastres go to £1 Egyptian, worth £1 0s. $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ in English money.

I paid several official calls next morning on the General, Sir Francis Grenfell, whose A.A.G. was my friend, Colonel Harry Cooper ; also on the Sirdar, Sir Herbert Kitchener, and my old Engineer friends, Colonel Green, C.R.E., Major Gordon, and others. We found several friends staying at the hotel, and although Cairo was not full, people were arriving every day from England to spend the winter there. The weather was charming then, not too warm, and very few mosquitoes or flies.

As we heard that we could get good cabins on Cook's mail steamer leaving on 11th, we put off our sightseeing in Cairo until our return from Assouan, and embarked ourselves on s.s. *Hatasoo* at 8 A.M. on that date. There was the usual crowd of donkey boys, hotel porters, and the great unemployed and unwashed to see the steamer start, which she did with great punctuality, nearly leaving some of our fellow-passengers' luggage behind.

The first day's voyage is, perhaps, the most interesting of the whole, as the steamer passes by old Cairo and the Isle of Roda, cut off from the city by two creeks, in one of

which Moses is said to have been found by Pharaoh's daughter. Further on, the Pyramids of Ghizeh are very conspicuous, and the fine carriage-road to them runs along the river bank for some distance, and is always crowded with camels, donkeys, and carriages of all descriptions. Sakkarah, near the ruins of ancient Memphis, is further south on the same bank, and is best known from its "Step Pyramid," which we saw well outlined against the setting sun. Sir Frederick Stephenson and Major Bagnold, R.E., exploited the celebrated statue of Rameses II. there, and put it on its present supports.

Helouan, on the opposite bank, a few miles from the river, with its natural hot springs, has become quite a fashionable watering-place for Cairo residents, and is connected with it by railway. The Pyramids of Dahshur are an important group, and look imposing at a distance, but are in reality in a very advanced state of decay.

As night came on we gradually left "Pyramid Land" behind us, although, from the tortuous windings of the river, we had several unexpected glimpses of some of those huge erections on the distant horizon.

The steamers are nearly flat bottomed, with very powerful engines and paddles to drive them up stream against a three-knot current at low Nile, and the force of a torrent when the river rises. The native passengers and crew live on the lower deck, the upper one being reserved for first-

class passengers, the saloon and cabins being there. We fared well as regards food ; and, having but few passengers, we had a cabin each, all very clean and with comfortable berths. There were also good bath-rooms, but the Nile water is very brown in appearance, though soft and pleasant to use.

One point that struck us as peculiar was that the steamer had no captain. The navigation was done by two " Reis," or native pilots, who lived and slept on the bridge. Then there was Cook's manager, who looked after the catering, the comfort of the passengers, and arranged all the trips on shore. All the native passengers and cargo on the lower deck were looked after by an Egyptian clerk, and his post was no light one, as he had to collect the tickets at each landing-place in the midst of a jostling throng of natives all jabbering at once.

I think the best division of sightseeing on the Nile is into three classes, described by one author as "Pyramid Land," "Temple Land," and "Tomb Land," and after a short time, I think the ordinary traveller has almost a surfeit of ruins, the only appreciable difference between them being a few thousand years more or less in point of age.

I must say personally that I take exception to the modern upsetting of all my juvenile ideas as to the age of the world. The new works of Dr. Budge, Dr. Flinders Petrie, Miss

A. B. Edwards, Dr. Pollard, in his 'Land of Monuments,' and Murray's Guide, start with the idea that 5000 B.C. is about the average recognised date of the Creation, but one author comes down to 4400 B.C. Why should not 4004 B.C. be correct? That the Bible is the oldest, most accurate, and reliable book, we have always been taught to believe; but in Egypt they give you chapter and verse from old hieroglyphics that their first dynasty was one thousand years before the Creation of the world. I leave it to philosophers and savants to settle the matter between them. I am satisfied with Holy Writ. I believe that most of the ancients calculated by the moon, making lunar months and years, hence many popular errors.

We had a most agreeable and enthusiastic fellow-traveller on board, the sister of a well-known Captain, R.E., who saw and did everything. She had lately been at Damascus, Baalbec, and Palmyra, a trip of considerable fatigue and hardships, and she showed us some most interesting sketches of those historical but seldom-visited places.

I do not propose to weary my readers with a description of the temples, tombs, obelisks, and monuments which we saw *en route*, as they are all too well known. Suffice it to say, that we had a ride round the prosperous town of Assiout, visited the fine temples at Denderah and Edfoo, and reached Assouan just a week from Cairo.

Our tickets allowed us three days in Assouan, where there

is a good and reasonable hotel. We did the regular trip to the beautiful ruins at Philae on an island above the First Cataract, going by train and ferry, and shooting the rapids on the way back, marvelling at the cleverness of the steersman in avoiding the formidable rocks with which the river is studded. Being a party of about a dozen, we hired a large native boat with ten oars, and the rowers, on whom so much depends in getting round awkward turns, beguiled the way with native songs, solos, and choruses, rather monotonous, but not unmusical. The rapids are crowded with native boys who, for the smallest consideration, go rushing down the steepest part astride of a log, and always come up smiling, though rather breathless.

The Sirdar had come up to Assouan on his way to the front in his own stern-wheel steamer, which was moored off the island he has bought there, and he entertained us at tea on board, and showed us round his domain, where he has no house at present; but he has irrigated the whole island, which will shortly become a regular garden.

Colonel Maxwell, D.S.O., Commandant at Wady Halfa, came down to Assouan to meet his wife, who had been a passenger in the P. and O. *Clyde*, which was nearly lost between Marseilles and Malta in the same storm which we experienced in the Mediterranean. We also made the acquaintance of Captain Pedley, the pleasant and courteous Commandant of Assouan.

We left Assouan on December 21st on the return journey by s.s. *Amenartas*, which dropped us at Luxor the next afternoon. There we spent our Christmas very happily, knowing a good many people at the hotel, and the dinner was quite a *chef-d'œuvre*, including crackers and bon-bons.

We had a long and tiring day on the opposite side of the river, visiting the remains of the great Thebes, as the heat and glare from the sand and bare rocks was very trying, even with coloured glasses.

The expedition to Karnak is much easier, only two miles distant, and no sand, and the fine temple at Luxor is close to the hotel, and a pleasant place to wander in, as no beggars are allowed in these havens of rest. Everywhere else they are the bane of Egypt.

On the 26th we once more took ship on s.s. *Nefert-ari* leaving in the evening, reaching Nagh-Hamadi the next afternoon, where some of our passengers took the train to Cairo, a journey of about fourteen hours. Here the river is crossed by a fine swing bridge, built by the French to carry the railway on to Luxor and Assouan; but it was not open for traffic then, owing to a landslip on the line half-way to Luxor.

It is an awkward place for steamers down stream to negotiate, owing to the set of the current round the piers, and we very ignominiously went through stern foremost, guided by hawsers from the shore.

For the rest of the trip we had a very cold head wind, and we had to put on everything we possessed to keep warm, as there was very little shelter on the deck.

It put me in mind of one of Albert Smith's songs, slightly altered :

"If you are hypondriacal or semi-maniacal

There is nothing half so jolly as to travel *up* the Nile,"

but not *down*, certainly.

We were much interested all the way in the fellaheen and their occupations, some lifting water with the shadouf, or earthen bucket, which is the usual system of irrigation, others looking after the patient bullocks working the "Saqqieh," or water-wheel, very roughly constructed of boughs of trees, with the earthenware pots tied on with leather thongs—most picturesque, but very unwieldy. The main roads follow the river bank, and on them are continual streams of camels, donkeys, and bullock-carts and their owners, on the move from one village to another.

We heard very little of the movements of the Nile Column, as the Sirdar is a most reticent commander ; though never sparing himself, he makes his officers and men do their work thoroughly, and he is quite ubiquitous. We saw some of the steel gunboats for the river service, which came out from England in sections, being put together at Shellal, above the First Cataract.

I think it is quite wonderful the way that the Egyptian

soldiers, or more familiarly "Gyppies," have been licked into shape by the English; their cavalry, artillery, and infantry are turned out in a most creditable manner. The military and civil native police are to be seen at all the small stations up the river doing their duty admirably, and there is evidently a spirit of devotion to duty and desire to improve awakened in the country. The Soudanese black troops are very fine men.

We got back to the Ghezireh Palace Hotel on December 29th, and came in for a spell of cold and exceptionally wet weather, which was unfortunate, as the roads were soon reduced to a sea of mud, and it made excursions uncomfortable.

We paid £25 each for our Nile trip, which extended to nineteen days, including our hotel expenses at Luxor and Assouan. This was by Cook's mail-steamer, which we found as comfortable as possible. They charge nearly double by the tourist steamers, which are larger and more pretentious, and take a week longer, as they arrange some kind of excursion every day, and there is dancing or a concert every night in the saloon.

One item not included in Cook's charges is the ticket issued by the Government Department of Antiquities, without which no one is allowed to visit the temples and tombs, the price of it being £1 for each person.

II.

EGYPT—SINGAPORE.

THE next day the Army General Orders were published for the "move up" the Nile, and all Cairo was in commotion. The "Warwicks" from Alexandria, and the "Lincolns" and "R.E.'s" from Cairo, were off before the week was out, and the 21st Lancers and Artillery followed them in quick succession. Hostesses were in despair at all their men being ordered off just at the beginning of the gay season, and entertainments had to be put off until the reinforcements had arrived from Malta and Gibraltar.

We dined with Colonel Green and the R.E. officers at their pretty mess-room in the Kasr-el-Nil barracks the night before some of them started for the front, so we were able to drink success to Majors Friend, Milo Talbot, and Sandbach, and Lieutenant Moir, who were the first to go. All that were left came to dine with us a few days later at the hotel to meet the G.O.C. of the Cork District and his wife, also Lady Heriot Maitland, old friends of ours, and we

finished up the evening by a dance in the old Khedive's drawing-room.

The most interesting sight in Cairo is the great museum at Ghizeh, which now contains all the curiosities collected by Messrs. Mariette, Maspero, Grébaut, Brugsch, De Morgan, and others, from the temples and tombs on the Nile. They are very well arranged, and the papyrus records and ancient jewellery are alone worth hours of inspection. They sell their duplicate specimens at a very moderate price, and guarantee them as genuine. All the mummied animals and *scarabæi* offered for sale by the natives up the river are of very doubtful value, and we heard that there was a great manufacture of such things in Birmingham and Germany. We had some quaint odds and ends given us by Lieutenant Tucker, R.E.; they are constantly found in the mud of the Delta by the men in the Irrigation Department.

The city of Cairo itself is a great attraction, with its busy crowd in many coloured garments thronging the streets and bazaars. The driving is most reckless, and all private carriages have their "sayces," or runners, in advance to clear the way, which is done with a good deal of shouting and whacking with their staves; they are very gorgeously arrayed, scarlet and gold being the favourite livery, with a very jaunty cap and tassel on their heads.

The most comfortable way to traverse the city is by electric trams, which run in all directions and all meet

at Atab-el-Kadra, a large open space which very much resembles Charing Cross in the general bustle and changing of cars. One line runs to the foot of the Citadel, which is now used as barracks for the English troops. The finest mosque in the city is within the walls, and the Khedive attends there regularly once a week. The view from it is superb, embracing the whole city, the windings of the river, and the Great Pyramids, with the desert stretching away to the distant rugged mountains.

We paid our visit to the Sphinx and Pyramids of Ghizeh on New Year's Day, 1898, in bright but cold weather. There is a very good carriage-road the whole way, eight miles, lined with trees, and the last few miles perfectly straight and slightly uphill. It is always crowded with carriages, cyclists, and camels, and there is a coach running once a day from Cairo.

The Mena House Hotel, built at the Pyramids, is pretty and comfortable, and we found an old Homburg acquaintance established there as manager for the winter season. Many invalids spend the whole winter there, as the desert air is so beneficial to delicate lungs, and the building is well warmed, and luxuriously furnished. Being within an hour's drive of Cairo, it is not too remote for shopping excursions and seeing friends, and I should think a month there would be very pleasant.

We thought the Pyramids and Sphinx much over-rated ;

they are so hackneyed, and donkey-boys, beggars, curiosellers, and photographers are so importunate, that we were glad to get away. It is no doubt on a very grand scale, but I think it is perfectly astonishing to consider the fearful waste of time that the old Egyptians indulged in to complete these pompous and ponderous monuments.

Another excursion we made was to Helonan and back by train, about fifteen miles, where they are replacing the old sulphur bathing establishment with a new building, not before it was wanted. There are several first-class hotels there, and boarding houses, and with its fresh desert air it is becoming quite a fashionable cure ; in fact, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha made a long stay there a few weeks later.

There is a pretty English church in one of the main streets of Cairo, and we attended service there on January 9th, when a new pulpit was dedicated by the Bishop of Salisbury. There are many interesting brasses on the walls to the memory of distinguished soldiers, including, of course, Charlie Gordon.

We had tea and talk that afternoon with Captain Lyons, R.E., and his wife, at whose wedding we had been present about eighteen months before in London. He is the head of the Geological Survey, and much thought of by the Government. He has to make long trips into the desert, and his wife often accompanies him, and altogether they seem to enjoy Egypt thoroughly.

We were unable to see Lord Cromer and his family, as they were away nearly all the time of our stay in Cairo, being at Fayoom, which is becoming a fashionable resort, and is the chief town in the Oasis, fifty miles off. Sir Francis and Lady Grenfell were also there. Lord Cromer gave his first official ball of the season just after our departure, and we heard it much talked of beforehand.

M. le Comte de Cirione and Sir Charles Fremantle, two directors of the Suez Canal, were most courteous to me. We heard much about irrigation from Major Hanbury Brown, since made a C.M.G.; and it is principally his department which enables the fellaheen to cultivate the valley of the Nile, thus paying rent to the Government which keeps up the revenue. There are several ambitious schemes in view for improving the irrigation; the works well started by Scott Moncrieff and Ross are nearly completed, and Egypt, with the help of the English army and officials, will be able to hold her own, and become again a fertile, rich, and strong country.

I should recommend no one to go to Cairo for economy. Our expenses for a fortnight's stay were about £60, but it was perhaps the most expensive hotel in a by no means cheap place. There is a joke in Cairo that they charge you five piastres (one shilling) for everything at the Ghezireh Palace, even for the use of a chair. This is doubtless an exaggeration, but it gives some idea of the expenses in

Egypt. Instead of outsiders "spoiling the Egyptians," they "spoil" you, and the English occupation must be worth thousands a year to the Cairo hotel and shopkeepers, who are mostly French, and are certainly exacting a monetary revenge on "perfid Albion."

It is undoubtedly a very gay place, balls, picnics, and parties of all sorts are of daily occurrence ; there is cricket, football, polo and pony racing at the Sports Club, and plenty of military music every afternoon ; this is really charming for an idler. Our visit was a short one, but I should judge that Cairo is the most "gossipy" city in the East.

As our steamer might be expected in the Canal any time after January 12th, we arranged to go to Ismailia and join her there, so we packed up our trunks and tore ourselves away from the delights of Cairo on the 10th, taking the train to Ismailia. Our tickets cost about £1 each, and luggage another £1 10s., for they make travellers pay extensively in Egypt for such luxuries. Our previous journey from Port Said to Cairo cost us £6, which was certainly not cheap.

At Ismailia we put up at the Victoria Hotel, close to the landing-stage, very clean, good cooking, and reasonable as regards price ; it is under the same management as Shepherd's at Cairo.

We had an introduction to M. Tellier, the courteous

Superintendent of the Canal Company, whose headquarters are at Ismailia. He took us out in one of their launches next day to visit a dredging vessel, and we went ashore at one of their signal stations known as Gare No. 7, kept like a lighthouse, with two chiefs and three assistants, one of whom is always on watch. There are twelve Gares altogether, with telephonic communication with the central office at Ismailia, and ships are directed by the chief there as to passing and "tying up." There is a model of the Canal at the office, with labels to represent each ship passing through, so they can see at a glance the position of each one and stop it when necessary.

We were told that the gigantic new Russian cruiser, the *Rossia*, was on her way through, so we drove to Gare No. 6 next day and saw her pass. She had to be considerably lightened by removing guns and coals, which were towed in barges behind, and she had two powerful tugs to help her round the corners, as they were desperately afraid that she would stick and block all the traffic. She looked such a monster with her four black funnels, as seen from the water's edge; and we were near enough to have talked to those on board, if we had known something of their language.

The widening of the Canal is almost completed, as they are at work on the last few miles; this will help the traffic very much. The modern passenger ships are so much broader than the designers of the Canal ever contemplated,

that when two of them meet, one is obliged to tie up ; except when crossing Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes, where there is plenty of "sea room."

There are eighty pilots and three hundred other employés on the Canal staff, and the greater part of them are French, Italians, and Greeks, but very few English. During the construction of the Canal there were six thousand natives encamped at Tussoum, six miles to the south of Ismailia, and remains of their dwellings can still be seen, though now half buried in sand. They were supplied with water from the sweet water canal which was cut right through from the Nile, and is now much used by native boats with cargoes of all sorts, the transit, though slow, being much cheaper than by rail.

We thought Ismailia a bright clean little place, the roads well shaded with trees and constantly watered ; in fact, better than most Egyptian towns, including Cairo, which are by turns dusty and muddy.

It is hard to grasp the fact that the whole place is artificial, and thirty years ago it was a salt swamp. It says much for the genius of De Lesseps and the enterprise of the Khedive Ismail, that such a nice town should have sprung up on the very edge of the desert.

We took a drive round the grounds of Ismail's Palace, where he entertained so regally at the opening of the Canal. The building is deserted and rapidly decaying, but there are

pretty drives in the woods surrounding it, and the trees are very fine.

We heard of our steamer early in the morning of 13th, but owing to a defect in her steering-gear she had to tie up for several hours after leaving Port Said, so she did not put in an appearance till late in the afternoon, and we went off to her in the pilot launch with our rather extensive baggage. Our cabins on the *Bingo Maru* were very much the same as on the *Tamba*, so we soon felt quite at home on board.

Our total expenses in Egypt, including the trip on the Nile, railways, carriages, hotels and "back-sheesh," were about £175 for thirty-five days. That is not so much out of the way, considering the place and season, and you get your money's worth in considerable luxury, perfect change, and enjoyable scenery.

We were out of the Canal at daylight on 14th, and were clear of the Gulf of Suez by the evening. We passed the neighbourhood of Mocha on 18th, and after making our number at Lloyd's signal station on Perim Island, we left the Red Sea behind us.

On 22nd the eclipse of the sun was due to take place, and we crossed the line of it about 10 A.M., and so were in a favourable position to observe it. The first contact was soon after nine o'clock, and the gradual paling light was very gruesome, especially its effect on the colour of the sea.

It was not quite a total eclipse with us, but the tropical sun was reduced to a sickly crescent, giving no heat and very little light. Our Chinese crew took the matter very calmly, although it fell on their New Year and was supposed to be a bad omen. We had expected them to turn out, beating all the pots and kettles to drive away the bad spirits, as they would do in their own country. With their usual inventive faculty they filled buckets with water and got a reflection of the sun in them, and so watched the whole business comfortably, whereas we all suffered from stiff necks, and, in spite of smoked glasses, saw dancing "suns" for some hours afterwards.

As the Japanese steamers do not call at Colombo going eastward, we only sighted the extreme southern point of Ceylon at Dondra Head on January 26th, and then made a straight course for Acheen Head, on the north end of Sumatra, which we reached on the 30th.

For the next three days we were shadowed by a mysterious man-of-war, which kept cruising round us, but never quite close enough for us to make out what nationality she was. At last, on February 1st, she steamed close up alongside of us, so close that we had rather to alter our course for fear of collision, and she proved to be a Frenchman called the *Jean Bart*, and we heard afterwards that she was on her way to Saigon in Cochin China. We never found out what she wanted,

and could only guess that she might have thought we were a Japanese transport or man-of-war, but in any case she behaved with scant courtesy.

We reached Singapore early in the morning on the 2nd, and thought the island-studded approach to it more beautiful than ever.

We drove to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where we had stayed in 1893, and found it so crowded that we had to put up with indifferent rooms looking into the China High Street, and rather noisy. Colonel Bogle, C.R.E., to whose care we had our letters forwarded, very kindly sent us our budget of news by Mr. H. H. Hinderer, Superintending Clerk, R.E., so we felt we were once more in touch with England, after three weeks' silence.

We drove with Colonel Bogle, late in the afternoon, to call on Mr. Sneyd-Kynnersley, who was Acting Administrator at the time, the Governor, Sir Charles Mitchell, being away. We went on to the Tanglin barracks to leave cards on the West Yorkshire Regiment, recently arrived, and saw the end of a football match between R.A. and R.E., a very keen contest in spite of the tropical climate. One of the most enthusiastic players was Lieutenant Woodroffe, R.E., who is also a good cricketer, and we saw him play several times on the club ground in Singapore.

One night we dined with the Administrator and his charming wife at their comfortable bungalow, which, with

its beautiful garden, is in the Government House domain. Another night there was a moonlight performance by the band of the regiment in the Tanglin Botanical Gardens. The moon was the least satisfactory part of the entertainment, as the night was very hazy and oppressively hot, and not a breath of air, although the gardens stand high. The music was very good, and the bandmaster, Mr. Bentley, had been originally a band boy in R.E., and was just about to take his discharge and settle in Australia.

On the 5th we went through the misery of a Chinese "cracker-night," being the first full moon in their New Year ; such fearful rows and explosions. The wonder to strangers is that the whole city is not burnt down. There are always several bad accidents on those occasions, from the ponies and horses being scared and bolting. There are stringent police regulations regarding these native functions—and they are only allowed on certain days in the year, when all residents are careful to keep indoors.

We lunched the next Sunday with the General, Jones Vaughan, and met there Admiral Bridge, on his way home from Australia, where he had been in command for three years ; he was travelling in his old flagship the *Orlando*, which was going home to be paid off. They were all much disgusted when the orders came for her to wait at Singapore, owing to the complications in China. Finally we heard that the Admiral left her, and went home

by the German mail, after spending about a fortnight grilling in the harbour.

There were two torpedo-catchers anchored in the Roads, the *Whiting* and the *Fame*, lately convoyed out from England ; they were both most extraordinarily speedy, doing twenty-seven knots, or more than thirty miles, an hour. Their weak point is their small coal capacity, and they were waiting for the escort of a man-of-war to get on] to China, as they cannot carry more than a few days' coal, so have to be helped out by the larger craft.

The *Plover* gunboat came in from Borneo, where she had been to help suppress a native rising against the police. Her commander, Lieutenant Spencer de Horsey, had been in Singapore when we were there in 1893, and I had seen him first as a boy when his father, now an admiral, was Commodore at Port Royal, Jamaica, in 1873.

An American cruiser, the *Raleigh*, arrived about the same time, to coal ; she was on her way to China ; in fact, every nation seemed to be sending warships to the East, owing to the acute stage of the Chinesc question, and among the latest arrivals was the *Rossia* (which we had seen in the Suez Canal), looking uglier than ever.

The *Deutschland* and the *Gefion*, representatives of the "Mailed Fist," were expected daily, but were delayed nearly a fortnight by coaling arrangements at Aden and Colombo,

and entertainments to Prince Henry. The *Deutschland*, too, is very slow.

I dined with the Admiral one night on board the *Orlando*, and Colonel Bogle, Colonel Casey, R.A., and other officers, were of the party. It was blowing very hard, as it often does at night there, and we had an uncomfortable time in the Harbour Master's steam pinnace, which was sent to take us on board. Among the guests was the Captain of the American cruiser *Raleigh*, a most benevolent-looking old gentleman, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles; he was a most entertaining *raconteur*. He said he found his ship terribly hot in the tropics, and the officers of the *Orlando* complained of the same thing; in fact, modern men-of-war are not constructed for comfort, the steel or iron ships get like ovens in the day-time, and have not time to cool down in the night.

I lunched with the R.E.'s at their quarters on Pulo-Brani, an island opposite the Tanjong-Pagar Docks, where the Submarine Mining Establishment has its headquarters, and most of the men live there. The mess-house has a beautiful view up and down the straits, and is fairly cool, but I fancy the mosquitoes are plentiful.

One battery, R.A., is at Blakan-maki, another island further off, the other battery being at Fort Canning in the middle of the town.

We met an old friend, Captain Pitts, who had just arrived

from Western Australia in the *Sultan*. We had travelled with him in 1893 when he was commanding the *Saladin* of the same line. He tried hard to persuade us to go back with him to Fremantle to see our old friends and all the improvements made there and in Perth during the last five years ; but we were pledged to go elsewhere. My ladies lunched with him on board the *Sultan* the last day of our stay, to say *au revoir* to one of the nicest skippers I ever met, and I wish him every success.

We went down to the docks one morning to see off the North German Lloyd steamer *Preussen*, with Sir William Robinson, the Governor of Hong Kong, on board, who was going home on leave after six years' hard work in the island, the plague during the last year being an extra burden and anxiety. He had been very kind to us when we were there last, so we wanted to bid him *bon voyage* on this occasion. The *Preussen* is a very fine steamer, but somewhat too ornate in the saloon. They say she is cool and comfortable, but not so good as the new P. and O. boats.

There is a curious difference in the administration of the Government between Hong Kong and Singapore, though both under the Colonial Office. At the former the General Commanding the Forces has a dormant commission as Lieutenant-Governor, and when the Governor is away, he is sworn in as a matter of course. At Singapore the chain of

government goes down through the list of the civil members of the Council, and until that is exhausted, the General—who is also a senior member of Council—does not come in, which seems to be a fallacy in a large and important fortified garrison town. The three first Imperial Governors of Singapore were Sir Harry Ord, Sir Andrew Clarke, and Sir William Jervois, all R.E.'s of considerable reputation. It would appear now that the Colonial Office tries to keep the military element as much in the background as possible. The only retaliation the soldiers have is to fire the morning gun at 5 A.M. from Fort Canning, which dominates the whole place, thus waking up most people from the only refreshing sleep possible in the tropics. It is an awful nuisance.

III.

J A V A .

OUR great object was to get to Java, and there was no convenient steamer until February 10th. The Dutch and French Companies charge such prohibitive rates to Batavia and back—very nearly £12 each ticket—that we thought we should do better by putting ourselves into the hands of an old acquaintance, Mr. B., who is agent for several local steamship companies, and he selected for us the *Gian-An*, which would take us to Batavia and Samarang and back, and perhaps on to Sourabaya as well, weather permitting, at the rate of £9 each.

As she was due to start at daybreak on the 11th, we went on board the evening before to dine and sleep. Our unpleasant experiences began as we left the landing-stage to go off to the steamer, because it was blowing hard, and the small steam launch that had been sent for us rolled her gunwales under at every wave, and we had to hold on for all we were worth. When we had scrambled on board the steamer with a good deal of difficulty, we were greeted by

the most overpowering smell I have ever met with, from her cargo of decayed fish, and the Chinese and native coolie passengers; and I may say we were thoroughly miserable for the next forty-eight hours.

We had a great deal of wind and rain all the next day, and it was only the following morning that we were able to sit out on deck and enjoy ourselves at all. In consequence of the bad weather we were obliged to keep our ports shut in our cabins, which added to the discomfort.

I must say, in justice to the steamer, that the captain offered to do anything in his power to make us comfortable; but he could not control the "smells," which were the principal nuisance. The weather, too, was quite exceptional, as being just on the equator it is a region of calms, and storms are of very rare occurrence. There were only three other passengers on board, and we just managed to exist.

Early in the morning of the 13th, after a terrible night of rolling and pitching, we passed through the "Thousand Islands," and reached the harbour and docks at the mouth of the Batavia river, called Tanjong Priok. It is the port of Batavia, and is well sheltered by a breakwater, and protected by an old fort and battery; an old paddle man-of-war was lying in the harbour to uphold the dignity of the Dutch flag and Her Majesty's Navy.

We had quite decided that nothing should induce us to go further in the *Gian-An*, although we had originally in-

tended to go overland and meet her at Samarang or Sourabaya, and then back to Singapore ; but having had bitter experience of her drawbacks, we decided to part company with her and get back to Singapore the best way we could.

We landed about 8 A.M., and got our things easily cleared through the custom house by a most polite official, who spoke very fair English. We had good coffee and English biscuits at the pretty little railway station, just like one in Holland.

Being Sunday we had to wait some time for a train, but eventually we got off about 9.30 A.M., by the narrow-guage railway which, following the course of the river, reaches Batavia in twenty-five minutes, the station being in the business quarter of the capital of Java.

The hotel "tamby," or porter, took charge of our things, and we took the steam-tram which runs the whole length of the very long city, and we alighted at the Hotel de Java. We thought the place very picturesque, with shady streets and canals in all directions. All the shops, like the living-houses, are one-storied bungalows, on account of earthquakes, and each surrounded by a large garden ; so the city spreads over an enormous area.

We were much puzzled to see the word "Eijs" written very large at all the important street corners as we went along, and on inquiry it turned out that they were the municipal ice-houses, where ice may be obtained at a

nominal sum. This is one of the things that the Dutch do better than we do, as in an English tropical colony ice is often a rare and most expensive luxury.

Our hotel was arranged like all the others, the bedrooms in separate pavilions, and the *table d'hôte* and other public rooms in a central block, with deep and cool verandahs.

At luncheon we had our first introduction to the celebrated "Reis-tafel," which is a Java speciality. It is a dish, the base of which is rice, and on this is heaped about twelve different sorts of meat and fish, with eggs and spiced condiments, and finished with chutney and hot pickles. It is very fascinating at first, but it must pall after a time, and I should think would end in a decided liver attack.

The weather was oppressively hot, and as we found there was an afternoon train up to Buitenzorg, the famous hill-station, we decided to move up there at once. It is situated on the lower slope of one of the magnificent mountains which form the backbone of the island, and is about forty miles from Batavia, and nine hundred feet above the sea.

The journey took us two hours, and our tickets cost nine shillings each return, and the luggage extra, as the Dutch habitually charge for that. The views on the journey are most beautiful and varied; the colours of the jungle flowers and the bright stuffs worn by the natives add to the brilliancy of the scene.

On arriving at the station the gharry drivers and coolies

greeted us with acclamation, and it was with much difficulty that we selected the best of them, and were soon driving at a hand-gallop up the excellently kept road leading to the Hôtel Belle-Vue. There we were given some very good rooms opening on to the verandah, with its celebrated view of river and mountain scenery, which I have so often heard described by enthusiastic travellers. There we spent our first night in Java.

On the morning of January 14th we had an early tea on the verandah of the Belle-Vue Hotel. We saw the sun rise over the grand mountains and gradually light and warm the lovely valley and river beneath us, where the natives were bathing, and the world generally waking up and setting about its avocations for another day. The railway line up country from Buitenzorg was just under our windows on the slope of the hill; the whole scene is not unlike our Richmond overlooking the Thames.

After packing up our things we went for an hour's drive round the beautiful Botanical Gardens and neighbourhood; we saw the barracks where the headquarters of the Dutch East Indian army are stationed, the soldiers generally with bare feet and wearing cloth shakos, tunics, and trousers. Some of the native troops are fine-looking men. The officers seemed to be all Europeans, and wear a smartish uniform. I fancy, from what we heard, that they fail most in tactics and strategy, and make very little impression on

their native opponents at Acheen in Sumatra. There is a joke that the only way the Dutch troops hold Acheen is by having an armoured train on a line surrounding the settlement, which daily makes excursions and fires at the natives, who keep at a respectful distance. The Government does not get much "forrader ;" in fact, I believe that this little game has been going on for over twenty years. Sumatra, if in our hands, would probably be a peaceful and productive island, but we gave it up, as well as Java, after the Peace of 1815 ; a great mistake.

Our carriage, called a " Milord," something like a barouche or four-seated Victoria with two horses, was driven by a native, who, it turned out, had been pearl-fishing in Western Australia some years before under a man whom I knew very well when I was stationed in Fremantle, 1858-62. He spoke English fairly well, and was much interested when I told him that I knew all about the colony ; he drove very well for a native.

We returned to the hotel about 10 A.M., had an excellent breakfast, and left for Batavia by a train about 10.40 A.M., arriving at 1 P.M.

I may mention, while on this subject, that the trains on the Java railways run only in the daytime, about 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. ; after that they shut up for the night. This makes travelling through the island long and tedious, and prevents many English, who have only a short time

to spare, from seeing the interior of this really beautiful country.

I should recommend anybody wishing to travel in the Dutch Indies to buy two little books which we had with us, viz., 'Guide to the Dutch East Indies,' published by Luzac and Co., 46, Great Russell Street, London, translated by the Rev. B. J. Berrington, B.A. ; and 'From Jungle to Java,' written by a Mr. De Keyser, of the Straits Settlements Civil Service, a most entertaining and useful little work. You can get now nearly everywhere in the island by railway or steamer, and the hotels are fair and reasonable.

We returned to the Grand Hotel de Java at Batavia, had luncheon with the "Reis-tafel" as usual, then I started out with an amusing American electrical engineer, who had come from Singapore in the steamer with us, to transact some business in the city, to see about our passages, and go to the necessary bank.

It came on to rain very heavily for about two hours, and we found out that it was the usual thing in the afternoon in February, making the place very damp. We therefore decided to return to Singapore as soon as we could get a decently clean steamer, instead of going on to Samarang and Sourabaya.

The ground-floor rooms in the pavilion of the hotel were rather full of mosquitoes, and we were afraid of fever, as we had preliminary symptoms from the smell and discomforts

on board the *Gian-An*, so, after coquetting with the French Mail Steamship Company, we took our berths in a Chinese Company's steamer called the *Ban-Poh-Guan*, which enabled us to use our return tickets. The French steamer would have cost about £8 each, and she was not particularly modern.

The evening of February 14th we chartered another "Milord," with a good driver and groom, to go the round of Batavia, seeing the König's Plein, Waterloo Platz, and other fine open spaces where the best people reside, and where the Governor's Palace and offices are situated.

Golf, lawn-tennis, croquet, and other English games are played by the residents, who have good clubs, and frequent pony races.

The ladies in Batavia do all their shopping in the evening, driving about in handsome carriages, usually in full evening dress, without hats or bonnets. During the daytime it is the fashion for the ladies to wear only a short sleeved bodice and "sarong," or native skirt, reaching just below the knee, and the bare feet slipped into high-heeled shoes, with smart ornamented fronts. Unfortunate men have to wear the usual garb of civilisation.

There is a Chinese quarter in the city where these enterprising people have established themselves, and apparently do a good business. The agents of the steamer in which we returned to Singapore were Chinese, and we had a great

deal of trouble in making them understand what we wanted, as interpreters were few, and I only knew "Pidgin" English.

On the morning of the 15th I got up very early to write letters for the French mail to Singapore, and afterwards went on to the König's Plein to see the troops at drill. They were principally engaged in "forming square" to resist natives, I suppose; the field officers were mounted on funny wiry little ponies, which we used to say in Australia came from Timor. I did not see their artillery and cavalry, but I heard they were very active, and were considered the "crack corps."

I had a long morning in the city between breakfast and luncheon, and returned to the hotel hoping to have a quiet afternoon. When reposing on our verandah, however, we were suddenly aroused up by a Chinese "tamby," or messenger, saying our steamer had arrived at Tanjong Priok, and was waiting to take us to Singapore.

We had hardly time to collect our things, charter a carriage, send on our baggage to the railway station, and rush off to catch the 4 P.M. train, leaving behind our American friend, who could not get his clothes packed in time. It was pouring with rain as usual.

When we got down to Tanjong Priok Docks we found the roadway half under water, and we had to hop, skip, and jump along the wharf until we reached the *Ban-Poh-Guan* just ready to cast off.

The Captain had his daughter on board, and they gave us up the three remaining cabins. The steamer carried principally pilgrims, called "bogies," as deck passengers, from Celebes to Singapore *en route* to Mecca, under a contract with the Chinese company.

Before I leave the subject of Java, I should like to say that from what we heard and saw, the natives are well off, firmly but justly ruled, made to work on the estates, not far removed from patriarchal servitude, but on the whole happy and contented. The great Government monopolies of coffee and tobacco enable the planters to get a fixed price for their produce, and I fancy that the Dutch masters are prosperous and popular. The smaller officials and shop-keepers are of several nationalities; the first soldier, a marine, I spoke to was an American. We met Germans, French, and English at the hotel and in the train.

The interesting suburb of Batavia, called Meester Cornelis, is where we fought and beat the Dutch in the early part of this century, and when the celebrated Sir Stamford Raffles governed the island, he lived at Buitenzorg, in the fine house still used by the Dutch Governor-General; and his wife, who died there, has a monument erected to her memory in the Botanical Gardens adjoining.

We should like to have gone to Soerakarta and Djokjakarta to see the wonderful temples, to Garoet in the mountains, and to Samarang, Sourabaya, Cheribon, and

Tjilatjap on the coast, and other well known places, but we had not the time, and the weather was so uncertain.

We wanted to catch a good steamer from Singapore to reach Rangoon early in the season, before the rains, so we felt that we must retrace our steps, hoping at some future time to "do" Java thoroughly. The mountainous and volcanic character of the island makes it most picturesque.

We had already been at the adjacent Bali Island on our way from Australia in 1893, and we think that we ought to complete our travels in Java and the neighbouring islands of Flores, Timor, Celebes, Borneo, the Moluccas, and possibly Sumatra, when we next go eastward, and at a better time of year as regards weather.

We left the place with great regret, having enjoyed our short visit to the Dutch East Indies, so different from English colonies.

The coinage in Java is a little puzzling at first: the standard coin of the Dutch East Indies is the gulden, worth about 1s. 8d., and divided into 100 cents, so 5 cents equal 1d., which is an easy calculation at the present rate of exchange. They give about 117 gulden for 100 Singapore dollars, and I should say that one gulden in Java goes as far as an English florin, as they charge about 5 gulden a day at the hotels.

The Captain of the *Ban-Poh-Guan*, an excellent host, had a very good Chinese steward whom he called "Mutton-

head," who looked after our comfort in our little cabins aft. These all opened on to the main deck, and the pilgrims were encamped on the poop. Our dining saloon held about ten people at the table, and we spent the rest of the day on the Captain's bridge, where we heard and saw everything in the chart-room, and were accompanied by a very intelligent Kangaroo hound, who was a great favourite with us all.

We passed through Banka Straits on February 16th, Rhio Straits on the 17th, and early on the 18th anchored in the roadstead off Singapore, which we had left exactly a week before. We had considerable experience of all sorts of weather, but fortunately on our return journey it was fine and pleasant.

Having telegraphed to our friends in Singapore, we found the best rooms at the Hotel de l'Europe ready for our reception on arrival. Our expenses in Java, besides our passages, which cost £25, were about £10.

IV.

SINGAPORE—BURMA.

WHEN I went to the office of the British India Steam Navigation Company, on the day of our return to Singapore, I found that the movements of their steamers were all deranged, as the engineers of the Company had struck, and it was almost impossible to say when the matter would be settled. Sir James Mackay, the Chairman, was travelling in the East, and was expected at Rangoon and Singapore to discuss the question. We wanted to go in a steamer which stopped at Penang, and at as many other ports as possible ; but as the Company decided to send the *Pentakota*, an old but comfortable poop-decked steamer, on February 23rd, direct to Rangoon, and as we had a painful experience of smaller steamers, we decided to take this opportunity of reaching Burma, so we took our passages in her, for which we paid £6 each.

As we had nearly a week to spend in Singapore we took the opportunity of driving out to Johore, which is situated on the mainland of the Malay Peninsula, about twelve

miles north of the city of Singapore, with a capital road all the way to the ferry across the tidal creek, nearly a mile wide. Singapore is really on an island called after the Prince of Wales, but the name is seldom used except in Government surveys. There is a capital little hotel or rest-house at Johore, where you get good English food and all the English newspapers ; in fact, it is a great resort from Saturday to Monday for the young Britishers who take their "bikes" over in boats, and explore the neighbouring native territory, and finish up with a quiet gamble in the evening at a Chinese "Fan-tan Pidgin" establishment, which is farmed out by the Sultan of Johore, and is, I believe, perfectly well conducted.

The palace of the Sultan, situated on rising ground just above the village, has a splendid look-out all round ; the grounds are well kept. There is a mosque close by where the remains of the late lamented Sultan, so well known in Europe, are deposited ; there is also a private pier where the Sultan and his friends can land, at the bottom of the garden. There are many guest chambers in the palace, all furnished in the latest French style, and in former days they were well filled by the Sultan's visitors. The present Sultan lives much at a house he has nearer Singapore, called "Tattersalls," and he throws himself into all the European amusements of the place, and does a good deal of racing as well. I daresay when he is older he will devote more

time to looking after the well-being of his subjects ; he has a fine property which, if properly developed, would bring him in a very handsome revenue. He is fortunately under the tutelage and protection more or less of the English Government, and cannot, therefore, give much trouble.

The drive to Johore is very pretty, passing at the back of the lovely Botanical Gardens at Tanglin into forest-like country, with houses here and there on the little elevations in the jungle. There are police stations at nearly every corner, but robberies are frequent in these detached residences, even those nearer Singapore. The day before we arrived from Egypt, the Police Magistrate's bungalow was cleared out while he was dining with friends in the neighbourhood, although he had both dogs and watchmen. I believe the thieves were never caught.

The truth is that our rule is just but too lenient for Orientals. The Chinese and Malays are most expert thieves, and require to be treated in a more drastic fashion than we are accustomed to in England. If they were dealt with by their own judges and mandarins they would probably be condemned to lose their hands, if not their heads.

I remember the story of a Colonial Governor who emptied the prison at Hong Kong, because he said the Chinese there were hardly treated ; in consequence, the city was "burglarised" and robbed for months afterwards. Natives are not

accustomed to clemency in their rulers, and consider it only weakness.

I had an interview, a few days before we left for Burma, with the Governor, Sir C. B. Mitchell, whom I had known previously in the West Indies. He lives in the magnificent Government House just outside Singapore, built by Sir Harry Ord about 1868-70, in a lovely park, and on a hill overlooking the racecourse and surrounding country.

We could not dine with the "Royal family" on this occasion, as we were already engaged when invited. The last time we dined at the "palace" was with Sir Cecil Clementi Smith and family in 1893, just five years before. Sir Charles Mitchell had just returned from Calcutta, where he had been studying the Coolie Emigration Question, which is very important in that part of Asia.

We attended evening service in the cathedral close to the hotel, where the singing is very good. The crowd of swinging punkahs overhead gives one a rather strange sensation.

My friend, Colonel Chippindall, R.E., had arrived in Singapore, while we were in Java, to relieve Colonel Bogle as C.R.E. I had soldiered with him at Chatham twenty years before, soon after he had returned from the Soudan, where he had been employed under Charlie Gordon, when Governor-General; he suffered much from fever for years afterwards. He had lately come from Sandhurst, where

he had been for a considerable time as Professor of Fortification at the Royal Military College.

We dined the night before our departure with Mr. Stringer, the head of Paterson and Co., one of the largest shipping houses in Singapore, at his pretty bungalow, where the mosquitoes were very troublesome. Mrs. Stringer is the daughter of Major McNair, C.M.G., R.A., one of the oldest Government officials in the Straits, and had been Surveyor-General, Director of Works, and Lieutenant-Governor of Penang, and is now enjoying his well-earned repose at Brighton.

Next morning I said good-bye to the General and leading officials, and Admiral Bridge still waiting with the *Orlando* for the arrival of Prince Henry, whose ships were expected that day, Ash Wednesday. The *Gefion* arrived early in the morning, waking up everyone with her salutes ; but the flagship *Deutschland* only got in late in the evening. We thoroughly enjoyed the fortnight we spent in Singapore. We had been there only four or five days on previous occasions, and we did not find the place bore us at all ; it is so bright and enterprising. There is always something going on ; a capital club, lawn-tennis, cricket, croquet, racing, and many dances. The residents are wonderfully kind and hospitable. The presence of a regiment and band, men-of-war lying in harbour, and constant steamers arriving from England, India, and China, prevent anything

like stagnation. There are many pretty drives, especially to the fine Botanical Gardens, and to the picturesque reservoir at the Main Water Works. There are occasional theatrical companies—the “Brough-Boucicault” Company were there during our visit, performing in the Town Hall. There are endless trips to be made in steamers to the neighbouring islands and ports. We really hope to see Singapore again; its tropical foliage and colouring make it alone worth while visiting.

Our total expenses in Singapore were about £45, including much shopping and gharries. With the trip to Java we spent about £80 in three weeks; but this includes an expensive steamer trip, and I do not consider it at all out of the way.

Just after leaving Tanjong Pagar and the Straits to the north of Singapore, we passed the “Mailed Fist,” urged along with English coals from Colombo, and doing, I should say, about eight knots. Prince Henry and his officers appeared on the bridge, and we waved our hats and handkerchiefs to the noble Germans, who ought to have been in Singapore that morning. There was a lunch prepared for them at the German Club, and a dinner and reception for the Prince at the Governor’s in the evening.

We were sorry not to call at the ports in the Straits, such as Malacca, Selangor, Perak, the Dindings, and Penang; some of them are most rising states, well looked after by

the Government residents under a Resident General in Singapore. The wise policy initiated by Sir Andrew Clarke, Sir W. Jervois, Sir F. Weld, and Sir Cecil Clementi Smith has borne fruit, of which we are now reaping the advantages.

The acquisition of Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 has not been half appreciated up to the present time. There is no doubt that it is the most important place on the high road to China and the Eastern Archipelago, and its value is increasing every day ; the number of steamers passing through is enormous. It is like the " Willesden " or " Clapham Junction " of the English railway system, and it is fortunate we did not let it slip through our fingers like Java and Sumatra.

I may mention that Deli, on the east coast of Sumatra, is becoming a most important Dutch settlement. We travelled in the *Bingo Maru* with a German doctor and his bride going out there *viâ* Singapore, and he told us much about the place, how civilised it had become, and the number of steamers—English, Chinese, Dutch, and others—which called there ; in fact, I believe, except at Acheen, there is very little trouble with the natives in Sumatra, and some people say that the Acheen war is fostered by the army contractors.

It seems a pity that some project is not advanced for cutting a canal or improving the communication across the

Malay Peninsula, south of our province of Tenasserim, to the Gulf of Siam, to shorten the distance to China. I suppose there are considerable difficulties, but on the map it would appear to be feasible. I think in the narrowest part it is not more than sixty miles across. I am not sure about a mountain range which may intervene. At all events, our interest in Siam ought to be increased instead of diminished, as seems likely at present. Its proximity to Burma and the Shan States makes it most important just now, and when at Mandalay and Bhamo it strikes you more forcibly ; but of this more anon.

We had a very comfortable time on board the *Pentakota*, fair cooking and the Indo-Portuguese stewards attentive and clean. I slept on deck as much as possible, but the cabins were roomy and good. The punkahs were always kept going in the saloon, and the Captain had a special "fanner" behind his chair.

Our American electrical engineer friend, Mr. L——, was a fellow-passenger as far as Rangoon, and went on to Calcutta the day after we arrived in the corresponding B. I. steamer, which was quite full, mostly children, who go to school at Darjeeling at that time of year. He was a very amusing companion, but always complained, at every place, of losing exactly £2. I suppose he left his purse and money lying about ; we rarely lost anything.

We passed through the Straits of Malacca without seeing

much land until we arrived at the Mergui Archipelago, after sighting the lights of Penang in the night ; we entered the Gulf of Martaban on February 26th, and made the lightship and pilot station at the mouth of the Rangoon River on Sunday, February 27th. We picked up our pilot, steamed up the thirty miles of river, and by 10 A.M. we were alongside one of the many fine wharves which line the left bank of the river at Rangoon. There are many creeks, and lights and leading marks on the different points, but I take it that the navigation is very difficult on account of the numerous mud banks and the great rise and fall of the tide.

We bade farewell to our courteous Captain, who was very anxious to get on to Calcutta, and thence to England on leave. We had few passengers from Singapore, one was a Roman Catholic schoolmaster, very curiously dressed in a black cassock and white flannel trousers, evidently an Irishman from his strong brogue ; another was an enterprising commercial traveller, much interested in mines and patents, and had travelled extensively.

We had a little trouble with the Customs about "fire-arms," as the regulations prohibit even revolvers being landed without paying heavy duty ; they were very civil to me, as mine was at the bottom of a trunk, so I could not get at it, as I explained to the collector the next day.

We went to Evershed's Hotel on the Bund near the Custom House and principal streets, but although the

cooking was not bad the bedroom accommodation was very rough and indifferent, and the hotel being full we had to put up with wretched rooms on the ground-floor. We did our best to keep the mosquitoes off, and passed the evening after dinner on the flat roof of the building overlooking the city, which was really nice and cool.

Before dinner we chartered a carriage and drove with Mr. L—— through the city to the Cantonments, the royal lakes and gardens beautifully laid out in Dalhousie Park, where the band of a native regiment was discoursing sweet music; the flying ants, midges, and mosquitoes were rather a nuisance, as they swarm about the water in the ornamental lakes. We called at the Pegu Club, a very charming building near the Cantonments, and inquired for the R.E. officers, many of whom are stationed at Rangoon. On our return drive we passed many churches and buildings lighted up, and people driving, walking, or “biking” in the cool of the evening, and it gave the place quite a brilliant appearance, but in the daytime the streets have rather a patchy and disjointed look; some of the new buildings are fine, but they are few and far between. The Cantonment is large, as it is the headquarters of the Rangoon Division, with two Generals and Staff and many civil officials. The Lieutenant-Governor was then at Mandalay.

There are practically no hotels, so called, in British

Burma ; most people stay with friends, or in boarding-houses outside the towns. The hotels (of which I visited most on our return to Rangoon three weeks later, when "Evershed's" had let our rooms over our heads to some American travellers) are simply "grog-shops," and have large bars with sleeping accommodation attached, very second-rate, and avoided by every lady as much as possible. The residents are very hospitable, and I understand delighted to see visitors. Then the steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company have excellent accommodation and cuisine, and passengers are allowed to live on board at any of the ports on the river at a fixed charge, I believe about ten shillings a day.

Early next morning we went to visit the elephants at work at the timber yards, one of the most interesting things I have ever seen ; the docility, tractability, and genuine talent of these huge animals is simply marvellous ; they move the largest trunks of trees and baulks of timber as easily as a man shifts a plank, and the accuracy with which they stack the logs is truly amazing. The Messrs. Macgregor of Rangoon have reason to be proud of their valuable huge assistants who are trained in the forests, and are only brought to the yard when thoroughly reliable. The way they put down their loads and march off to breakfast when the bell rings would do the heart of a "British workman" good to see. I believe they are in their prime when

sixty years old, and they live much longer. It is stated that they are worth three thousand to four thousand rupees each when trained.

After a drive through the town, seeing many pagodas and doing some shopping, we returned to the hotel to re-pack our things for the trip up to Mandalay and Bhamo. We decided to go up by train and back by steamer on the Irrawaddy all the way to Rangoon. We took tickets at Messrs. Cook and Son's to enable us to do this at a cost of £30 for the three; this did not include feeding on board the steamers, which averaged about ten shillings a day each, including wine and very good service. We bought a capital map of Burma, published by the Survey Department of India, showing all the rivers, roads, and railways, and the coast line from Calcutta to Tenasserim; very useful for travellers.

Captain Murray, R.E., of the Government Railway Department, came to the hotel to call and to help us in our transit to Mandalay and Katha, the latter on the new Mu Valley Line, where you take the steamer for Bhamo. Colonel Aylmer, V.C., R.E., the Assistant Adjutant-General of the Division who had just come from service on the Indian frontier, came to see us on his bicycle, and offered us every assistance. Both of these officers are very charming men and are deservedly popular.

V.

B U R M A .

WE left our heavy baggage at Evershed's Hotel and drove to the station for Mandalay. We found a good compartment reserved for us and started at 6 P.M. on our long journey. The carriages are good and the line well laid. We passed many picturesque villages and any number of pagodas, and arrived at Pegu, a large military station, about 8 P.M., where we found a good dinner awaiting us. Here we made a bargain for some hand-towels to use on the journey, having omitted to bring any, and the Government provide nothing of the sort in the sleeping carriages.

After a long and cold night's travelling we breakfasted in the refreshment car near Yamethin Station, the junction for Meiktila, a large district station, and reached Mandalay about midday; here we changed trains to get to Sagaing Ferry, close to the old capital, Amarapura, where we had to cross the Irrawaddy in a large steam ferry-boat; the water was so low in the river that we had to scramble over long shaky planks to get on board.

A good tiffin was ready for us in the saloon, and by the time we had finished we found ourselves at the other bank, with a stiff climb up the steep incline to Sagaing Station.

The train was waiting to take us on to Naba, where a branch line runs down to Katha, on the river, through lovely scenery. We dined at Shwebo, a large and important station where we picked up the Deputy Commissioner and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Collins, nice people, who were very kind to us next day at Katha.

Shwebo is a large military station, in fact, all over Burma you find English and native soldiers and armed police, nearly all Sikhs or Pathans, from the frontier of India; they are very fine men, and under English officers are most trustworthy and faithful; we saw a few Ghoorkas at Rangoon. The Burmese themselves are no good as soldiers. "Dacoiting" used to be their principal amusement, but this has been almost suppressed by the Government and the military police.

Reaching Naba Junction at 7 A.M., we had an early breakfast with good fruit, including "papai," our first introduction to that excellent product of the East, like a melon in appearance and very wholesome. We had an hour to wait before the train started for Katha, and until the sun rose it was bitterly cold.

The Mu Valley State Railway now extends to Mogaung and Mytkyina on the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy about

eighty miles above Bhamo, but as the steamer service there is uncertain, being principally conducted by steam launches from Bhamo, during the dry season, we did not like to risk being stuck on a sandbank on the way down to Bhamo, so we gave up the idea of seeing that part of the river.

When we got to Katha, about 8 A.M., we found the up steamer had not arrived from Mandalay, the low state of the river making all arrangements uncertain, so we proceeded to the official bungalow near the station, where the circuit judges put up, and Mr. and Mrs. Collins ordered breakfast to be prepared, having their native servants and provisions with them ; they fed us very well, and were most hospitable and kind.

We had baths, which were very welcome after two nights in the train, and at 10 A.M. the s.s. *Irrawaddy* hove in sight with two huge barges or flats alongside. We arranged with the Captain that, although she was a cargo steamer, we should go on in her to Bhamo instead of waiting for the passenger steamer, whose advent was uncertain. We were glad afterwards that we did so, because the other steamer, *Momein*, was twenty-four hours late, and we should have seen nothing of Bhamo. as the steamers are timed to return at fixed dates. Mr. and Mrs. Collins could not go on at all, their time being limited.

The Captain of the *Irrawaddy* was a Dane, Malling by

name, with a favourite dog and a large pipe. On these steamers all the steering is done forward on the lower deck. The Captain sits in an armchair close to the wheel of the steam-steering gear, and directs everything from this point by simply waving his hands to the men at the wheels on the flats, made fast, one on each side of the steamer, and growling out his orders to his own "steerer." The turns and twists of the river are so sharp and the sandbanks so numerous that it requires constant attention to prevent the steamer grounding, and the Captain rarely leaves his post even for meals, which are brought to him on deck; but as they usually anchor at dark, he gets his dinner in comfort, with his passengers, who are all located on the upper deck forward; the natives are all aft.

The two anchors at the bows are always ready to "let go" immediately if required, with small buoys attached to show their position when down, and on approaching a stopping-place a dozen of the crew plunge overboard and swim at racing pace, carrying a hawser to make fast to any handy post or tree on the bank.

We passed a large camp on an island called Kyaung Daw-Gyi, just above Shwegu, occupied by natives, who had come in boats from near and far, to hold their annual fair, lasting a week. It looked like a large town built on the sand with streets and open spaces all decorated with flags and streamers, and presented quite a festive and picturesque appearance,

and we could hear sounds of music and revelry. We were told that half-a-dozen military police stationed there were sufficient to keep order; the only difficulty is to prevent gambling, which is prohibited by rather a strict law.

Shortly after that we entered the gorge called the "Second Defile," where there is a most picturesque little pagoda perched on a projecting rock, half way up the wooded cliff, on the right bank, with a gilded spire visible at several turns of the river, and looking prettier at each view.

It is apparently kept in good order, but in most cases these edifices are allowed to fall into decay, as it is not worth anybody's while to restore another man's pagoda built as a propitiatory monument for some particularly bad act. Each one must build his own to be efficacious in the next world.

We anchored both nights between Katha and Bhamo, the navigation being very difficult owing to the winding channel and the low water. It was not until morning on March 4th that we reached Bhamo, and made fast to a temporary landing-stage on the left bank, with a rough and steep path leading to the little town.

The weather was very hot, and as we had two soldiers of the Essex Regiment on board going up to the fort, having come from Shwebo, I sent a note by them to the Commanding Officer, saying we would come up later in the day.

It was very amusing to see the crowds of natives come down for the cargo, and also have a "deal" in the bazaar established on the upper deck of one of our flats; the lower deck was full, principally of wood for the steamer's engines. The colours of the dresses and other goods for sale were most startling, chiefly scarlet and magenta; it really was a never-failing source of interest to us to see how the bazaar people got on. It is said that they go up and down with the cargo steamers for years, trading at all the ports on the river, and making a large profit.

In the course of the afternoon the Commanding Officer, Major Brown, and one of the officers of the Essex Regiment, came down to see us and had tea and refreshments on board. We landed when it was cooler and drove about the rather dirty little town.

The most uncommon sight to us was the encampment of the pony caravans which transport all goods from Bhamo for Central Asia and the remote parts of China. The men in charge of them are of a most forbidding type, and the shaggy ponies are not much better. We visited a Chinese temple, saw some elephants at work, and bought some native stuffs, handsomely embroidered, from a local dealer reported to be very sharp.

We saw the fort in the distance, where there are stationed a detachment of the Essex Regiment, a battalion of Sikhs, under Colonel Howlett, whom we met that day at the club,

and a Mountain Battery R.A. The latter were away for gun practice in the mountains, and we heard of them afterwards from a Ceylon friend who had been up to see his son, a Lieutenant in the battery ; it is stated that they are very smart.

We heard the band of the Sikh Burmese Regiment play in front of the club, and after a long talk with several of the officers we returned to our steamer to dine and sleep, there being no hotel at present at Bhamo.

The *Momein* of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company came in late in the evening a whole day behind time. The Captain, Oliver by name, came on board and narrated his experiences of being stuck on a sandbank near Shwebo Crossing, of which we had practical experience later on. I believe he was more than twenty-four hours aground. However, he was very cheery and prophesied that we should soon be in the same position.

We were up early next morning surveying our position ; we were really close to the Chinese frontier, and the mountains in the distance alone divided us from Yunan, a Chinese province. There was a Delimitation Commission somewhere in the neighbourhood, which was detained at a point between British Burma and the river Salween, because the Chinese General, a member of the Commission, could not move his escort on ; it was stated that they had no food, and he refused to give them any cash to buy "chow-chow,"

without which they could not march. This was his excuse for not moving on, corrupt as usual.

Major Longe, R.E., of the Indian Survey, was a member of the Commission, but we did not meet him. I hear he has arrived in London lately, so I imagine that the Commission did not get very far. This country is very interesting to a Royal Engineer, as poor Captain Gill made his adventurous journey through it when travelling from China to Burma, *viâ* Talifoo and Momein to Bhamo, over mountains 8000 feet high, and across many large rivers which have been so well described by General Yule in 'The River of Golden Sand,' the head waters of the great Yang-tze-kiang river.

We left Bhamo about 7.30 A.M., accompanied by Major Brown and Lieutenant Halahan of the Essex Regiment, who were going for a few days' shooting near Shwegu with their dogs and native servants; they left us about midday opposite the "Fair" island, which was still in full swing.

We naturally steamed down the river much quicker than we came up, and after repassing the sweet little pagoda in the defile, shining so brightly in the sunlight, we reached Katha the same evening, the down journey thus taking only twelve hours, while the upward journey took us two days.

On landing we went up to the club, a native mat-shed building, to hear the news and meet some of the residents. Among others was the pretty wife of the Deputy Commis-

sioner, who had just gone off with a body of military police to sit upon a party of Kacheens, who had broken out near Mogaung ; they had burnt a police station and refused to pay their taxes, which is not unusual with natives. We did not hear the result, but with railway and river communication, telegraphs, and European organisation, the wild tribes have not much chance nowadays. I fancy that at certain times of the year raids and rows are expected ; but the Government of Burma is always prepared, and think nothing of drafting troops and police to any disturbed district at a moment's notice. Manipur is no great distance from this part of Burma, and I believe it was from here that troops were sent after the sad outbreak and massacre in 1891. Captain Grant much distinguished himself on this expedition.

We left Katha early in the morning of March 6th, taking as passengers a military Chaplain, Mr. Blandford, who was going the round of the stations and garrisons to fulfil his clerical duties accompanied by his wife. She was quite new to the country and rather dreaded the many long rides before her. They debarked at Thyabetkyan, to visit the troops at Bernard-Myo, in the Ruby Mines District, quite sixty miles from the river and five thousand feet up a mountain.

We heard that General Barnard from Mandalay, with his staff, was at the "Circuit house" at Thyabetkyan waiting

to go on to Bernard-Myo and Megok next day to inspect the garrisons. I should like to have called on him, but we had not time to run up the steep bank to the official bungalow, more especially as it was just dinner-time, so we did not want to invade the General in the middle of his repast. We heard a good deal about the country from Mr. Blandford, who also knew several of our friends in England.

Our meals were all served on the upper deck in the open, as there is no saloon on the steamers ; there is a substantial wooden awning overhead and canvas screens at the sides to keep out the sun in the daytime, and we often had them down at night on account of the strong and rather cold wind that gets up on the river at sundown. We were much amused at the menus written by the Chinese steward for each meal. One night we were much mystified by the items "bancakes" and "bluming," which turned out to be "pancakes" and "blanc mange."

We passed through the third defile, the adjoining woods all ablaze with jungle fires : this is done to improve the grass and undergrowth, but seems a great waste of material. It had a lovely effect from the river, and it was most weird and fascinating to watch the flames leaping from tree to tree with a lurid light. We had to anchor early that night, March 6th, as we got into a thick fog from smoke and mist.

Next day, March 7th, we passed several large pagodas and shrines at Kyonkmoung, very prettily situated, at a bend of the river, and about 3 P.M. we grounded on a sand bank at Shwebo Crossing, where we remained three days. The afternoon was passed in laying out anchors and hauling on them, all to no purpose; in fact, we got deeper into the mire and sand. On the 8th we were joined in our adversity by the s.s. *Mogaun*, bound up stream from Mandalay, which stuck on a bank lower down the river and thus blocked the channel altogether. It took her until 4 P.M. on March 9th to force her way over the bar, so we had to wait where we were. The s.s. *Momein*, from Bhamo, caught us up in the afternoon of the 8th and laid alongside of us, so that we were able to go on board of her, which made a diversion; she had only one passenger, a Civil servant who was going on leave, and much disgusted at the delay. We moved a little at our next attempt on the evening of the 9th, but stuck again, and early next morning the *Momein*, drawing less water, with more powerful engines, steamed past us, forced her way over the bar and was off to Mandalay; we remained fast. Our position now became rather monotonous, and we were getting short of provisions.

There was a steam launch near us called the *Calypso*, employed in buoying and replacing bamboo stakes to mark the channel. The Captain hailed the launch, and we transferred ourselves and baggage to it about midday, and two

hours later we found ourselves at the wharves near Mandalay ; the city being about two miles from the river. We passed on the way down Mingun and its celebrated Great Bell on the right bank.

We found the s.s. *Beeloo*, of the Flotilla Company, loading up to return to Rangoon in two days time, so we took our passages by her, and arranged to live on board until she started.

There is no decent hotel in Mandalay, and we did not know the Lieutenant-Governor, or other officials, well enough to go on to the town on the chance of being put up by them, hospitable as they all are. However, we fared very well, because when I went into the Upper Burma Club I found there my old friend Beato, the genial curio collector and photographer, whom I had known in Yokohama in 1870. He took charge of us, and was delighted to show us everything worth seeing the two days we were there.

The club occupies the former residence of Queen Sapiolat, the vindictive and bloodthirsty chief wife of King Theebaw, and instigator of many murders. We deposed him in 1885, and he and his wife are now interned at Rutnagherry on the western coast of India. All the royal residences in the Palace enclosure, now called Fort Dufferin, which is about a mile square, are used as offices, mess-houses and officers' quarters, and Theebaw's audience hall is now arranged as a church.

It is a most fascinating place to drive about, so many of the four hundred and fifty gilded pagodas still remain there to break the landscape, and show what an important place Mandalay was under the Burmese *régime*. The walls of the palace are of great interest, the gateways still protected by towers and traverses, the whole surrounded by a moat, and in former days strictly guarded. The Lieutenant-Governor's house, built on a corner of the wall, is a beautifully ornate native building with a lovely garden round it, and kept in first-rate order.

We paid our respects to Sir Frederick Fryer and his wife, who very kindly asked us to a dinner-party, but unfortunately we could not accept their invitation, as we were leaving too soon. His cousin, General John Fryer, the G.O.C. at Cork, and his wife, had been with us in Cairo two months before ; he was an old friend of mine when soldiering in the Carabineers in Ireland in the Fenian days, 1866-8. His daughter had just married Major Massey, R.E.

They have races, polo, golf, cricket, lawn-tennis, and every sort of amusement in Mandalay. There is one European regiment, two Sikh Burmese regiments, one or two batteries of Artillery and a company of Sappers permanently there, which is considered a brigade, and the General has to visit the other stations in Upper Burma and inspect periodically. I should say it was a popular station : shooting is to be obtained, and when the railway to May-

Myo, sixty miles off in the mountains, is completed, there will be a cool and convenient sanatorium to fall back upon for change.

The May-Myo railway is to be carried on to the Kiung-Long Ferry, on the Salween river, about one hundred and fifty miles further, which, when finished, will be a very important link in the means of communication between Burma, the Shan States, and Siam. It is a very necessary work, and a company of Sappers, under Captain Marshall, is busily employed carrying it out.

I was present at a quiet R.E. dinner at the club, seven of us, cheery old Beato making the eighth, and we had good wine and excellent food. Next morning Captain Adams, R.E., came down to the steamer and took us up to Mandalay by the military railway, showing us the "Queen's Monastery" *en route*, and then handed us over to Beato. He showed us some of his interesting photos taken during the Siege of Sebastopol, and we also had a look at his fine collection of Burmese curios.

After an Italian lunch he went with us to the best known pagodas and temples in the city. The Arakan Pagoda is the most celebrated one, on account of its history and the amount of money lavished on it, even at the present day; but all these things will be found in Cook's Guide to Burma, which is well edited and capitally illustrated.

While on this subject I should like to say that a book

called "The Burman : his life and notions," by "Shway-Yoe" (Mr. Scott), is very entertaining and instructive. He writes with the knowledge acquired by many years residence in the country and study of manners, and is a safe guide to Burmese history. The truth is that the Burmese are an indolent and lazy people. The women do the greater part of the work, rule their lords with much judgment, and lead them with a silken cord. Both sexes smoke very large cigars, and the ladies carry their spare ones, like earrings, through the lobes of their ears. They all seem good-tempered and jocular, and I should say that the country is easily ruled by Europeans. Unfortunately they love gambling (who does not a little?), and the Government, wisely or not, try to suppress it. I think it would be easier to legalise it and tax it, as was once done in Hong Kong until an "Exeter Hall" movement put a stop to a fertile source of revenue.

VI.

B U R M A .

WE regretfully bade farewell to Mandalay on March 12th, when the s.s. *Beeloo* started for Rangoon. We satisfied ourselves that she would probably get us down on March 19th, in time to catch the s.s. *Derbyshire* in which we had engaged our passages to Colombo. Anyhow, there was always the opportunity of leaving the steamer at Prome and taking the train to Rangoon, saving about two days. Fortunately the *Beeloo* got over all the banks without mishap, but the steamer which left two days before her grounded on a sandbank before reaching Sagaing, less than eight miles down, and it took twenty-four hours to get her off.

We heard afterwards that our old friend the *Irrawaddy* never got beyond Shwebo Crossing, but had to discharge her cargo into boats, which were towed down to Mandalay, and her return cargo sent up stream to her above the bar. I suppose she did get up to Bhamo again in course of time.

We left Mandalay about 7 A.M., and after stopping at various places and passing the sites of the ancient capitals, Ava and Amarapura, we reached Pakoku about 7 P.M., where we made fast for the night.

There two of our passengers left to take a smaller steamer up the Chindwin river, which is an important tributary of the Irrawaddy. It rises some hundreds of miles to the N.W., in the direction of Manipur and the Naga Hills, and flows through many native states peopled with wild tribes. One of the travellers was a young man in the Forest Department, going to take up his Government duties for the first time in a very remote station, for which we pitied him. The other was a lady going on a visit to some friends near Kindat, a two-days journey, for change of air and scene. It seemed rather an out-of-the-way trip to make alone, but people think nothing of steamer travelling in Burma, and it is certainly very comfortable.

Leaving Pakoku early next morning, we passed Pagan in the afternoon. It is one of the oldest ruined cities of Burma. It has a frontage of six miles on the river, and the whole distance is a succession of pagodas, temples, and tombs, some of them colossal in size and with every variety of ornament and decoration. I should say it would take weeks to visit even the principal ones. The difficulty of sightseeing in these interesting places is the total absence of accommodation for travellers. The Government rest-

houses are open to all, but there is nothing in them beyond the bare furniture, so the travellers have to supply their own food, bedding, and servants, which requires some arrangement.

At our next stopping-place, near Pagan, they had been keeping high festival at the burning of an old "punghi," or priest, who had died some weeks before at a ripe old age. On these occasions the natives build up fantastic temples and colossal images of animals in wood and plaster, all round the funeral pyre, and then set alight to the whole thing, which makes a grand blaze. We saw two immense images of cats, which had escaped the burning, and we were much struck at the spirited way they were modelled, one on its hind legs preparing to spring being very effective.

Further down the river is Yenang-Yaung, where there are many petroleum wells worked by European companies, and is a very valuable property. The oil is shipped in special barges or flats and towed by the steamers; but as there were none ready for us we fortunately avoided the considerable smell arising from them.

We tied up that night at Minbu, about 6.30 P.M., and our Captain, a very pleasant man, called Hole, joined us at dinner; he was very particular and kept a good table. He had a Bantam bicycle on board, of which he was very proud, but unfortunately the tyres had come to grief recently at Mandalay, having been pierced by hundreds of thorns, in

going along a jungle road, and he could not get them repaired up there.

It was very cold next morning when we started early ; and in a few hours we reached Minhla, the old Burmese frontier town with a fort, where we had our first fight in the war of 1885 and lost one officer. In the afternoon we arrived at Prome, which has several fine pagodas, celebrated in story books, and look imposing from the river. It is an interesting town and occupied by our forces for a long time.

The sun was still very hot, and we had scarcely time to see anything of the place, so we contented ourselves by sending a telegram to Captain Murray, at Rangoon, to say we were coming down by river, as he half expected us to come by train, for which our tickets were available ; we heard that the sleeping carriages were not particularly comfortable, and that passengers are landed in Rangoon at an unearthly time in the morning. The Prome railway station is a fine one and the terminus of the Rangoon-Prome line.

A little above Prome on the right bank is Thayet-Myo, another old military station, and a very important place before we went up to Mandalay in 1885. I fancy that the officers of regiments in those days had a very good time at Tongu, Pegu, Prome, and Thayet-Myo, and infinitely preferred them to Rangoon ; there was good shooting and

plenty of sport near the Cantonments to keep people going. I have heard from many friends in former days that there were worse stations than British Burma.

We made fast for the night about fifteen miles lower down, and got under weigh at sunrise next morning, March 15th, but it got so foggy about 8.30 A.M. that we had to anchor again until the fog lifted. There are so many native boats about and huge timber rafts floating down stream that it is dangerous to try and "creep" along when the Captain cannot see where he is going. At length the sun dispersed the mists, and at 10 A.M. we passed a place, called Thomboo, where on the face of the steep cliff on the right bank are innumerable niches of all sizes with elaborate images of Buddha, in every sort of attitude, carved out of the rock, and the greater part of them highly gilded; the place is held in great reverence by the Burmese, and pilgrims visit it from all parts.

Henzada was reached in the afternoon, and we went on as far as Dan-a-byn that night. Near there a battle was fought in the war of 1852, when we pushed our conquests and annexation to Prome and Thayet-Myo; a fort still remains, but it is of little account.

There was the usual thick fog early next morning which delayed our start, but we reached Yandoon about 8 A.M. This town is the centre of the fish-curing industry, which consists in piling up the fish in heaps to be dried in the sun,

after which time it is considered a great delicacy among the natives. In consequence the guide-book warns all foreigners to avoid the place, as the smells are overpowering.

This is the beginning of the Delta of the Irrawaddy, and we entered the Maubin Creek, passing scores of native boats, and anchored at 6 P.M. The next day was March 17th, and appropriately dedicated to St. Patrick in this "paddy" country ; the weather was fine and sunny, but not too hot. We slipped down the creek, passing Maubin and Thongwa, but as these places are served by smaller steamers running from Rangoon we did not stop at them.

Approaching nearer to the principal mouth of the Irrawaddy, called the Rangoon river, the water gets very thick and muddy, the banks recede, and from Elephant Point you see what a mighty river the Irrawaddy is, and how well it is situated for trade. I believe about half the rice in the world comes from Burma, and possibly Siam ; there are hundreds of boats employed in this trade, all bound for Rangoon, where there is great speculation and excitement during the paddy, or rice season. There are a great number of rice mills about Monkey Point (the torpedo station at the entrance to Rangoon harbour), and the Payoundoung, or *anglicé* "Push-em-down" creek, off which we saw the tall chimneys constantly emitting black smoke.

We had to wait about two hours at the entrance to the

harbour for the tide to serve, and eventually we made fast to the Flotilla Company's wharf about 5 P.M., after nearly three weeks' absence from Rangoon. We landed and drove to Evershed's Hotel, where we had engaged rooms by letter from Prome, some days before, but they let them over our heads to some recent American arrivals, so they could not take us in. We inspected several other hotels, all bad and dirty, then returned to the *Beeloo*, where the kind Captain promised to look after us.

We got a cab, like a Singapore gharry, and drove about the town to do a little shopping, and returned to the steamer to dine and sleep in our comfortable quarters. They had liberally supplied us with mosquito curtains in the cabins, and they are an absolute necessity while anchored in the river at Rangoon, even in the cool season ; when the steamer was moving the mosquitoes hardly troubled us at all, and we were agreeably surprised, even when stopping at Mandalay and Bhamo, how little these pests interfered with our amusement and sleep ; of course we had the punkah going at meal times.

Early next morning, March 18th, we drove to the Pegu Club to tell my R.E. friends that we had returned. Murray was very polite, and asked us to the weekly Ghymkana afternoon dance and tea, and he also asked me to dine ; but we were obliged to decline his hospitality as we had already arranged to join the s.s. *Derbyshire* that after-

noon and dine and sleep on board. As she was lying several miles down the river, the launch was to leave about 4 P.M.

We went to see the great Shwe Dagon Pagoda, the finest and most sacred place of Buddha worship in Indo-China, and with any number of beggars at every turn. The "punghis," or priests, who always wear orange-coloured robes like togas, and shave their heads, abound here, as, like most of the principal temples in Burma, it has a monastery attached to it. These are kept up by the offerings of the people, and the priests teach all the children. Every good Buddhist has to pass some part of his existence as a "punghi," so as to be saved hereafter; but some cut it down to three months, although a year is the recognised period. The countless books written on this subject would, I am sure, bore the general public.

The Pagoda is built on a small hill 166 feet above the road surrounding it. The platform on which it stands is 900 feet long and 685 feet wide. There are four ascents by stone steps, and the principal entrance is guarded by two huge Beeloes or Leogryphs, built of brick, plastered over, and very highly coloured. Similar monsters are a great feature in all temples in Burma; they are supposed to keep off the evil spirits. (Our steamer, the *Beeloo*, certainly had "good spirits" on board, especially whiskey.) There is a very fine bell here also, but not so large as the

one at Mingun ; in fact, bell-casting seems to have been a fine art in Burma. They have no clappers, but are struck by a deer's horn or piece of wood from the outside, which brings out very little of their real tone. The wood-carving in the roofs of the different pavilions is very lovely. The "Hti," or umbrella, on the top of the Pagoda is encrusted with valuable jewels and hung round with silver bells, which tinkle in the wind. This was the last great gift of King Theebaw, but it apparently hastened the end of his monarchy. The Pagoda is really kept up by the Government, on account of its sacred character and the number of pilgrims that visit it ; but they enforce most stringent regulations for preserving order, and there is a guard-house within the temple enclosure.

We saw the Soolay Pagoda and other interesting buildings in Rangoon. There is a new Government House, which we did not visit, as the Lieutenant-Governor, as I mentioned before, was at Mandalay. We had another drive in the Dalhousie Park and round the Royal Lakes.

After luncheon on board the *Beeloo* we said good-bye to our courteous Captain, and had quite a rough trip on the launch down to the *Derbyshire*, which was anchored near the Hastings' buoy, about four miles off. There we spent our last night in Burma, and had a capital dinner, the English meat from the cool chamber on board being a great treat after some weeks of Eastern fare. There were

several other passengers similarly situated as ourselves, so we spent a pleasant evening, the distant city looking quite picturesque with its electric lights. The mosquitoes did not trouble us much, being far off shore.

All the other passengers and their friends came down in crowds of launches next morning about 10 A.M., and after a festive lunch on board, and many leave-takings of those left behind, we got under weigh, and we felt we were leaving a most interesting country, well worthy of a visit in the spring of the year, and a part of the great Indian Empire which we had never seen before.

Our total expenses in Burma, during three weeks' stay, including steamers, railways, hotels, and buying curios, were about £70.

We dropped our pilot about 3 P.M. at the lightship, and later sighted the fine lighthouse at Aguardo Point built by R.E.s years ago. It was fine, calm weather, and hardly anyone was ill.

The children, of whom there were about forty on board, were kept entirely in their own part of the main deck, none of them being allowed, on any pretence whatever, on the upper or hurricane deck, and in consequence we were able to read quietly and enjoy ourselves. It is not always so, as I shall afterwards narrate, when on another steamer, homeward bound, the children, brought up in the East, were a perfect nuisance. We found the *Derbyshire* a most

comfortable steamer. The Bibby Line have almost the monopoly of the Rangoon passenger traffic; at Colombo they come into the "ring" of the P. and O., Orient, and British India Companies, when the rate of passage money is fixed high, and no other steamers, except perhaps the Japanese line, dare to lower it. The passage money from England to Rangoon is very little more than that to Colombo, about £40. We paid £9 each for our passages between the two; the accommodation in all parts of the steamer is excellent, and the smoking-room particularly fine.

We passed the Cocos Islands on Sunday, the 20th, which lie to the north of the Andaman Islands. We heard a great deal about the latter from a passenger on board, who had been in the Government service there nearly thirty years, and saw the ghastly assassination of poor Lord Mayo at Port Blair in 1872.

Our average run was about 325 miles a day, or $13\frac{1}{2}$ knots an hour without any pressing, and there was little or no vibration from the engines.

VII.

CEYLON.

ON March 22nd we sighted the high land of Ceylon, near Batticaloa, towards evening, and passed close to the powerful lights on the Great and Little Bass Rocks, which were once a great source of danger to navigation. We rounded Dondra Head, the most southern point of Ceylon, about midnight and experienced some of the awkward swell which may be always expected in that region of cross currents. About 9 A.M., March 23rd, we found ourselves off Colombo, and in a short time we were anchored inside the breakwater, in rather an outer berth, the harbour being crowded with shipping from all parts of the world, amongst others the inevitable Russian man-of-war on her way to China, taking in British coals.

We handed over our heavy baggage to the representative of Messrs. Cook and Son, to pass them through the Custom House, which is some distance from the landing stage; he had been sent on board to meet us by Mr. Creasy, Cook's

agent in Colombo, who was an old P. and O. friend of mine. Colonel Savage, R.E., also sent his storekeeper from the R.E. office to interpret for us, and we were soon driving off to the beautiful Galle Face Hotel, about a mile outside the old fort and city. We found my friend Major Cleeve, R.E., living at the hotel, and several others called upon us later on.

As we had meant originally to have spent about four months in Ceylon, arriving there in January, we had sent our three tricycles to Colombo from England at the beginning of November ; but the temptation to go on to Singapore in the *Bingo Maru* and visit Java and Burma was too great to be resisted, so this change of plans put off our visit to Ceylon about two months ; in consequence the weather had got too hot in the island, so our "trikes" were never unpacked, in fact, they were never taken out of the Custom House, as we should have had to pay duty of a sovereign on each machine.

We had charming rooms on the second floor of the hotel, overlooking the sea, with a group of graceful palm-trees in front of the windows ; they were always cool at night, and we had a sea-breeze nearly all day and increasing towards evening. We paid about £22 for the eight days we were there, including a small sitting-room, wine, beer, and tips, which would be about £2 15s. per diem ; there were very good bath-rooms and an excellent restaurant. Soda-water

and other iced drinks are a considerable item in this part of the world.

We did a little shopping in the fort every morning, where the best shops are situated, and prices extravagantly high ; we were conveyed there in either pony "gharries" or "rickshaws," the latter very fast and comfortable. In the afternoons we strolled on the Galle Face Promenade and polo ground, where the band plays occasionally, and where Society drives between five and six. We drove several times to the fashionable residential quarter, called "Cinnamon Gardens," to pay calls and see our friends. The great rendezvous there is the Garden Club, in Victoria Park, where there is tennis and croquet every afternoon. After dinner at the hotel every one sits out in the quadrangle, which is open one side to the sea, and there coffee is served under the brilliant star-lit sky.

The Archdeacon of Colombo, Mr. Boyd, an old friend and connection of mine, came to see us, and one night we dined at his pretty house, which overlooks the large lake at the back of the town, but the mosquitoes were awful. Curiously enough, at the hotel they hardly troubled us at all ; there are so many punkahs and electric fans always working, besides the fine sea-breeze blowing through the building, that these pests are nowhere.

We went to tea with a nice old gentleman, Mr. Green, to whom we had an introduction ; he had lived many years

in the island. His house is a two-storied bungalow, which was rather uncommon at the time it was built, about forty years ago, and called by the romantic name of "Temple Trees," from two sweet-smelling flowering bushes in front of the door, the flowers of which are laid as offerings before the image of Buddha, in the Buddhist temples.

The Governor, the Colonial Secretary, and nearly all the principal officials, as well as many of the officers, were up in the mountains at Newera-Eliya, where every one goes who can get away from the plains between February and June. Then the monsoon changes, the rains commence, and the mountain resorts become impossible.

We saw a good deal of Colonel Savage, the C.R.E., whose ladies were at Kandy; also Colonel Fanshawe, the C.R.A., and several officers of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in barracks in the fort.

We were fortunate enough to travel on the *Derbyshire* with Mr. W. H. Thomas, of Ooonoonagalla, who is one of the best known planters in the island. He had known my uncle, the late Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Sim, R.E., Surveyor-General of Ceylon from 1859 to 1865; he had also known my brother, a coffee-planter from 1860 to 1876. He was very kind and asked us to stay with him. He also arranged for us to pay a visit to his son, Mr. Jocelyn Thomas, who is manager of a tea estate once owned by my

brother, and now belonging to Mr. Robert Bovill, a connection of mine, and living in England.

A well-known Colombo man, Dr. Murray, was also on board, a most cheery and pleasant companion, whom we met again afterwards at Newera-Eliya; also Major Fraser of the L. N. L. Regiment, who had been big-game shooting in Burma, and was carrying back his considerable spoils. We had known his distinguished father, the late General Fraser, and his sister in London, being near neighbours in Paddington.

We paid a visit to Mount Lavinia, seven miles to the south of Colombo, situated on a small cliff, which projects into the sea, from an otherwise flat and sandy coast. The hotel there is very much out of repair, but it is still celebrated for its Sunday "tiffins" and other entertainments for travellers; and there is some sea bathing to be had. There is also a barrack and rifle range close by, much used by the troops. The railway to Galle passes the hotel door, and there are frequent trains from Colombo, as the suburbs are rapidly extending in this direction.

After spending more than a week at the comfortable "Galle Face," we started for Kandy on March 31st by the afternoon train, and found it intensely hot. We shared the compartment with a family of English children under an excellent nurse, who kept them in a wonderfully good temper, considering they had come all the way from Galle

that morning, a journey of five hours from Colombo. We also helped to keep them amused by giving them bananas, which can be obtained at every station, as well as fresh cocoa-nut milk.

It is advisable always to take some bottles of soda-water packed in ice with you on this kind of journey in tropical heat. We carried out this principle on all subsequent railway journeys.

Being the Easter holidays, we provided ourselves with excursion tickets to Newera-Eliya and back, available for a fortnight, and costing only £4 for three people, the usual price of a single ticket; but they did not benefit us much as we were away about six weeks altogether, so as our "returns" had expired we had to take single tickets back to Colombo. Even with this our railway expenses were not great considering the distance covered.

The jungle scenery on the two hours journey between Colombo and the foot of the mountains is lovely, but monotonous. Then the ascent begins, the train crawls round sharp corners, along the edges of precipices, and in places the railway is carried on girders fixed into the face of the cliff, with a sheer drop of several hundred feet. The summit of the pass, through which the old coach road runs, is reached at about 1750 feet, and at a short distance beyond, at Peradeniya Junction, the line forks, that to the north leading to Kandy and that to the south leading to Hatton

and Nanu-oya, the nearest station to Newera-Eliya. The railway is a broad-guage one, with ordinary but extra powerful engines, and the pace is not allowed to exceed ten miles an hour up or down. The Kandy station is a terminus of the main line, but there is a short branch running to Matale about fifteen miles to the north.

We were met by Mr. Raden, the proprietor of the Queen's Hotel, with a smart barouche and pair in which we drove in state, and he was most attentive to our comfort during our two visits to Kandy, extending to a fortnight.

The hotel is situated close to the artificial lake, the great feature of Kandy, which was made by the last King who built a dam across the narrow valley, and thus converted an unhealthy swamp into a wonderfully beautiful lake. I should say it breeds millions of mosquitoes, but they were not bad in the hotel, although elsewhere they are rather poisonous. The dining-rooms and verandahs are very good and cool. We had upper rooms, over the entrance, which had lately been occupied by all sorts of celebrities, for which we paid thirty rupees a day. All the rooms opened on to a broad verandah, which was converted into quite a garden with tropical plants and ferns, and it was a delicious lounge during the heat of the day.

The temperature of Kandy, 1710 feet above sea-level, is about 5° lower than Colombo, without the refreshing sea-breeze, and is 20° higher than Newera-Eliya, which is 6240

feet above the sea. Kandy is a delightful place to stay in for a short time ; the drives and walks about the hills surrounding the lake and town are lovely. They are well-kept and very shady, with pretty peeps here and there of distant mountains and plains ; waterfalls abound, and the quiet and repose are most enjoyable.

The Temple of the Tooth is the great attraction for Buddhist pilgrims, who flock there from all parts of Asia. To the ordinary visitor the temple is of the most commonplace character, with none of the splendid carving and gilding so remarkable in Burma. There are some priceless manuscripts of Buddhist lore shown in glass cases in the temple library, but as the only access to that apartment is through a trap-door in the floor, it is rather a scramble to get there.

The sacred elephants, which play such a prominent part in the annual Procession of the Tooth, which takes place some time in August, are kept in an enclosure about two miles from the town, on the Mahawela river, and one of the excursions for visitors is to see them take their evening bath in the river, which they seem to enjoy very much. The best trained of them are hired for general purposes between the festivals, and they may be seen working on the different estates, chiefly in dragging timber where land is being cleared. We saw one intelligent animal assisting two small bullocks with their loaded cart, by pushing behind

with its head, and did it in such an energetic fashion that the two little beasts in front were nearly carried off their legs.

The Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, in a romantic position, nearly encircled by a wide sweep of the river, have a world-wide reputation, and to explore them is a treat in itself.

St. Paul's Church is a fine and lofty building, and well ventilated. There are also several mission chapels, Church of England, and other denominations, and I was much interested in the one connected with Trinity College, the late President of which was a well-known Merchant Taylor, who had lately lost his life in exploiting some native tribes, or Vedos, in the interior, who are still more or less savage. The college is now very successful, under the Rev. P. Napier Clavering, of the Church Missionary Society, who has lately come from England. Of course it requires funds.

The Bishop of Colombo, Dr. Copleston, is a splendid specimen of what a Merchant Taylor schoolboy should be in the Colonies, and Mr. Buck, the new President of St. Thomas's College at Colombo, is another Taylorian, who is doing excellent work in the island.

The second hotel at Kandy, Florence Villa, is on the opposite bank of the lake, about one and a quarter miles from the Queen's Hotel. Many people stay there for the whole season, being near the tennis grounds and the Country Club. It had an unenviable reputation last season of being

liable to burglary and robberies, which necessitated the watchmen being armed, and as a native always lets off his gun at the first opportunity, visitors returning after dusk in rickshaws were known to have been fired at with rapidity, but inaccuracy, on approaching the grounds of the hotel.

We left Kandy on Monday, April 4th, by the 10.40 train, to pay our visit to Mr. Jocelyn Thomas, his nearest station being Talawakele, about 4000 feet above sea-level, and ten miles beyond Hatton, the great refreshment station on the line, where all trains stop a quarter of an hour or so ; this is all in the neighbourhood of Adam's Peak.

It would take pages to describe the lovely views seen from the train, while winding up through this highly cultivated, but mountainous district. Tunnels, giddy viaducts, and deep cuttings, follow each other in quick succession, and it is altogether a wonderful piece of railway engineering, and was costly in proportion. One great curve in particular is known as the "Soda-Water Bottle," from the queer course it pursues up a very precipitous shoulder of the Great Western Mountain. I think it is really worth coming all the way from England to travel by road or rail in Ceylon, as you can feast the eye on beautiful prospects and changing cloud effects at every turn, getting cooler all the time, until you reach the temperate climate of Newera-Eliyah, 6000 feet above sea-level.

We were met at Talawakele station by Mr. Thomas, who

drove us to the estate, Coombe Wood, about two miles off. We alighted at the factory, and in a few minutes walk we reached the pretty bungalow built by my brother about thirty years before. It is about 4000 feet above the sea, and has a splendid look-out across to the Great Western Mountain, with the Kotmale-oya river roaring and tumbling in the valley far below ; truly a beautiful scene.

We passed two very pleasant days at this pretty place, visiting the tea-factory, and being introduced to the different stages of "rolling," "firing," and "packing" the leaves, all done mechanically by machines with the latest inventions, and most scrupulously clean. The estate supplies much tea to Australia and New Zealand as well as to England, under the celebrated "Bull" brand, so named from the owner's crest. There is a fine reservoir, 100 feet above the factory, which gives a good head of water for the "turbine," and it is large enough to do a little canoeing on it, one of the great amusements of the manager.

The Dimbula District has always been very go-ahead, and has a good church and pretty rectory about a mile from Coombe Wood. I believe that the parson has to serve two or three churches in the district. Several of the neighbours called during our stay, and from all we heard the same story, that the price of tea was never so low, and that it did not pay the expenses of working. The monopoly now being carried on by the Lipton Company is doing great harm to

the old planters, who cannot see their way to combine against this modern system of trading.

On April 6th we said farewell to our kind and hospitable young host, and asked him to join us at the Grand Hotel, Newera-Eliya, for the Easter races and festivities, then rapidly approaching. A Mr. Dimsdale who had come over in the *Derbyshire* with us from Rangoon arrived on a visit to Mr. Thomas just before we left, and eventually accompanied him to Newera-Eliya on Easter Sunday.

The railway journey on to Nanu-oya takes about an hour, and is 1200 feet above Talawakele. From there a road winds up the Nanu-oya river for $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, climbing another 1000 feet, but well engineered, and with good horses and a light trap the distance is easily covered in half-an-hour. There is occasionally a good deal of delay owing to the incessant stream of bullock carts crawling up and down the hill, so that most conveyances carry a very unmusical horn to sound when rounding the sharp turns on the road to warn the heavy carts ; but as natives are most leisurely in their proceedings it is a marvel that there are not more fatal accidents, especially going down hill.

We reached the hotel about 6 P.M., just in time to escape a downpour of rain, which laid the dust and cooled the air. We found it very cold at night, and blankets quite a necessity ; one day early, they said it nearly touched freezing, and most mornings the grass was quite white. In the

daytime the thermometer ranged from 60° to 65° only, even under a powerful sun.

It is a curious fact about the name of the place that hardly any two people spell it the same way. There is Newera-Eliya, Nuwara-Eliya, or Nuriya-Elia. Mr. Burrows, the Government Agent, who lives there, and has written a book about the neighbourhood, spells it the second way, but most people stick to the first as being more phonetic. Everyone, however, pronounces it the same, namely, "New-rail-ya," which has a very pretty sound. Lady West Ridgeway, the wife of the Governor, calls it "Neuralgia," from which complaint she suffers badly up there. I think from my own experience that it is a decidedly rheumatic place.

VIII.

CEYLON.

THE first view of Newera-Eliya seen from the approach from Nanu-oya is, I think, disappointing, there being no natural beauty about the rather bare valley enclosed by hills covered with scrubby bushes, with the exception of Pedro, which is well-wooded to the top.

It is difficult to grasp the fact that it is only since the last six or seven years that the place has sprung up to its present proportions ; among other improvements, was the making of the lake in the lower part of the valley with a good driving road all round it, a distance of about five miles.

The centre of the valley is occupied by the racecourse with polo, cricket, tennis, and croquet grounds, and round this are built a great many pretty houses. Others are built higher up the surrounding hills with very steep roads leading to them, and extremely muddy in wet weather. There is also a native market and bazaar, as well as several large stores for European customers.

Government Cottage, at the north end of the settlement,

stands in a beautiful garden in which English flowers do wonderfully well. The house is a tiny one, but has been much improved by the present Governor, who prefers to live there with his family about half the year. The latest addition is a ball-room and corridor, which was badly wanted for the entertainments there. There is an excellent golf ground for ladies and gentlemen close by and largely patronised, the Governor himself being a keen player.

The Hill Club is of course a great institution at Newera-Eliya, and occupies a pretty bungalow close to the hotel. There are good reading and billiard rooms as well as bedrooms for members; they have an excellent dining-room and cook, and lawn-tennis courts close by. The committee are very polite to visitors, and make them honorary members, and as everyone is to be met there some time during the day, it makes the life very pleasant.

The Colonial Secretary and Lieutenant Governor, Sir Edward Noel Walker, an old Jamaica friend of mine, was staying there, and gave a dinner-party to introduce me to the General and other officials the day after our arrival.

One of the most beautiful drives from Newera-Eliya is to the Hakgalla Gardens, kept up by the Ceylon Government for experiments in planting and cultivating beautiful and useful shrubs, flowers, and ferns, most of them familiar English ones. The gardens are situated in a romantic spot, about six miles from the hotel, on a small plateau, on

the eastern side of the dividing range, with a glorious view towards Bandarawela and Badulla, quite twenty miles off across the green and fertile Uva country. They are shut in, at the back, by a grand wooded mountain, which seems to be almost perpendicular above the Superintendent's bungalow.

Mr. Nock, the Superintendent, is a great factor in this part of the island ; he came from Jamaica, where he knew all about Cinchona planting, and he is a most expert and practical botanist, whose heart is in his work. He is also a churchwarden of the pretty church at Newera-Eliya. The Curator of the Peradeniya Gardens, Kandy is the head of the Government Horticultural Department ; but I fancy Mr. Nock is allowed very much his own way in working these Hakgalla Gardens.

The road leading there, which is a part of the high road to Badulla, is, like all the Ceylon mountain roads, wonderfully well kept. There are several sharp turns over gullies and round spurs which are only occasionally protected by walls, but the gradients are not excessive. Until the railway was made the prosperity of the coffee and other estates depended upon the state of the roads in the island. They were mostly made and improved by Major Skinner and his corps of pioneers, celebrated in the history of Ceylon.

The proper thing to do at Newera-Eliya is to climb Pedro Mountain, about 2000 feet above the town and the highest

peak in Ceylon. There is no difficulty about it, there being a good bridle path to the top, but it is rather tedious. It should be done early in the day, either on donkeys or on foot, as the afternoons always turn misty and very often rainy. Some friends of ours who adventured too late in the day, got benighted on their way down and were rescued just in time from losing their way in the darkness, by a surveying party, who had a camp on the summit, and came after them with lanterns and torches, rather an unpleasant experience, especially as one lady of the party was only just recovering from a severe illness. Dense fogs are also very frequent.

There is boat sailing on the lake for small craft, and there is a Yacht Club, which holds occasional races. I fancy from all accounts that it is not very safe, the squalls from the gaps in the mountains being rather frequent and sudden ; the lake is also deep and weedy.

There is a rifle range in the hills about three miles off, where matches constantly take place. Many of the ladies shoot well and carry off prizes. The soldiers, who have a convalescent depôt near the church, also practise on the range.

It seems a pity that there are not more soldiers stationed at Newera-Eliya. In former days two companies of the European and native garrison of the island were quartered there. Now it is reduced to about forty convalescents, from

the R.A., R.E., and the infantry regiment stationed at Colombo and Trincomalee.

There is a Volunteer Corps of Mounted Infantry in the island, which is principally composed of young planters and bank clerks, who turn out at regular times and take great interest in their training, which is done in camp near Galle. About twenty of them came to London for the Diamond Jubilee procession, and made a fine show, their average height being six feet and upwards. There is also a corps of Volunteer Artillery for defensive purposes. The total strength of Volunteers in the island is about twelve hundred men. The old Ceylon Rifle Regiment, which existed for many years prior to the "sixties," outlived its utility. The officers being much older than their "pucca" brethren, there were many difficulties in the garrisons; promotion was very slow, and there was much heart-burning in consequence. I remember the fact of half the regiment being sent to do duty in Hong Kong in 1867, because apparently they did not know what to do with them in their own country. They were accompanied by wives, children, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc., and heaps of followers, like a native tribe, and were a great nuisance.

The pretty church was largely attended for the Easter services, and the flowers were very lovely. I was much interested in two of the mural tablets in the building, one erected to the son of a distinguished R.E. officer, and the

other to the brother of a military friend, the latter having been murdered by his own coolies.

These cases do occur, but I am happy to say not very often. The imported coolies from the Madras side of India are occasionally treacherous and untrustworthy. The Cingalese will not work, and coolie labour is absolutely necessary for work on the estates.

There is a very good native hospital in an airy position on the slope of the hills on the road to the Moon Plains. We visited it more than once and thought that the patients looked well cared for. The nurses are European and Eurasian. There is a separate pavilion for paying patients, erected as a memorial to the wife of an old Ceylon resident ; it is a great boon to sick planters, and is generally well filled.

We got notice the last week in April that the *Tamba Maru*, our old friend of the Japanese line, would be at Colombo on May 18th, so if we wanted to see more of the island we should have to move on from Newera-Eliya.

After a long round of farewell calls we packed up our traps and went on by the afternoon train on April 27th to Bandarawela, the present terminus of the railway, and about three hours beyond Nanu-oya, the finest part of the whole line, both in engineering and picturesqueness. The summit is reached at 7000 feet, where a long tunnel intersects the dividing range, and here, during the south-west

monsoon, a complete change of weather is experienced, the western side of the ridge being covered with drifting rain clouds, and the eastern side bathed in brilliant sunshine and perfectly dry.

At Haputale station, where there is a natural gap in the mountains, there is a glorious view to the north and south. There has always been an important coach road through the gap, and it is notorious as being the most dangerous spot in the island during a thunderstorm, there being a great deal of ironstone to attract the lightning.

There is a comfortable little hotel at Bandarawela, with a capital Cingalese manager, and we stayed there two days. The great excitement of the day is the arrival and departure of the Badulla coach, which runs to meet the morning trains from and for Colombo. It is an eighteen mile drive and a hilly road ; the vehicle is rough, but workmanlike.

We were invited to pay a visit to a very pretty tea-estate, about two miles off, but the rain came down so heavily just when we were starting that we were obliged to send our excuses. Our experience of mountain weather was that it was nearly certain to rain in the afternoon, however bright the morning, and rain in those parts is not to be considered lightly, as the clouds envelop everything, and you are soon drenched to the skin.

We left Bandarawela by the morning train on April 29th and retraced our way over the wonderful line, with its

twistings, turnings, tunnels, and tea-plantations, to Nanu-oya. Here we changed carriages and had to wait for the up-train from Colombo, it only being a single line ; this was more than an hour behind time, so we got to Hatton very late for dinner.

The Adam's Peak Hotel there is very comfortable and much frequented by people who find the change of climate from Colombo to Newera-Eliya too sudden, so break the journey at Hatton, 4000 feet above the sea. It is just at the junction of the Dikoya, Maskeliya, and Dimbula districts, all well established tea-planting centres, so that it is a place of some importance and great trade.

We stayed there over Sunday, May 1st. On Saturday afternoon we drove to a cricket match at the Dikoya and Maskeliya Club Ground, situated in a pretty wooded valley surrounded by tea-estates. There are tennis-courts and a racecourse in the same place, but owing to the confined nature of the ground there are generally some bad accidents in the racing at the corners. There was a large gathering of the local society at the match. In the evening there was a planter's dance in the large dining-room of the hotel, lasting till midnight, when the ladies left and the men sang, cheered, and caroused until 2 A.M., rather disturbing to other visitors trying to sleep after a long day's sightseeing.

We made the acquaintance of Mr. Walker, C.I.E., of the Government Telegraph Department, who was staying at the

hotel. He is constantly travelling both by rail and bicycle to visit telegraph stations, and gave us much valuable information not obtainable from other sources. He had a very successful career in India before he was appointed to Ceylon.

On Sunday morning we attended a small mission chapel, when we had the English Church service read by a Nonconformist pastor, who also preached a sermon, which we were not prepared for.

We took a turn in the afternoon to get a distant view of Adam's Peak, and it is a most striking-looking mountain, like a gigantic thumb, and on the summit is a small Buddhist temple, built over an impression of "Buddha's" foot, and therefore very sacred. In actual height it ranks second in the island, Pedro being the highest, 8295 feet, Adam's Peak 7420 feet, and the Great Western Mountain 7264 feet. The climate at Hatton is very pleasant, and some people think it preferable to the higher hill stations; it is also nearer Kandy and Colombo, but we thought it very dull.

We returned to the Queen's Hotel, Kandy, on Monday, May 2nd, to make another week's stay there, as there were several pretty excursions we wanted to do.

On May 4th we were due to pay our visit to Mr. Thomas, senior, of Oonoonagalla, about eighteen miles from Kandy, so we left the hotel about 8 o'clock in the morning in a kind of four-seated buggy, with an awning and a pair of plucky

little horses, who breasted the hills gallantly. Our luggage was sent over by coolies, who started an hour before us, and arrived about the same time. There are many short cuts across the mountains, which the natives know well, and it is wonderful what distances they cover in a marvellously short time. The same coolies took our things back at the conclusion of our visit, and they told us the regular tariff was a rupee to each man, or about five shillings for the whole job.

We spent two most agreeable days with Mr. Thomas and his family. The bungalow, which stands on a natural plateau, on which English flowers thrive in abundance, commands most glorious views of woods and mountains, among the latter a fantastic shaped group called "The Knuckles." At the factory there are all the most improved machines for tea-rolling and firing, and they have an unlimited supply of water from a mountain stream, along which there is a regular fern-walk.

The hours for meals at a planter's are rather foreign fashion, as suiting the work on the estates. An early tea about 7.30 or 8 A.M., then a solid breakfast about 12, after that a siesta till tea-time about 4 o'clock, and dinner about 7.30. In the plains people do not dine much before 8.30, so as to enjoy the cool of the evening out-of-doors.

Our return drive passed off without incident, and being all down-hill we did the distance in about two hours,

A few days later we drove out to luncheon to a cocoa-estate, six miles from Kandy, owned by Major Pain, late of the Gordon Highlanders, with whom I had served in China, 1868-70. He and his wife live on the estate, in such a pretty bungalow, and with all sorts of pets, including a miniature deer and several amusing monkeys. The cocoa bushes are large with spreading branches, and look very well when the leaves are turning red, quite a contrast to tea-plants, with their dingy green. The pods are dried in the sun, then packed loose in sacks, as they do not spoil in transporting.

My friend, Sir Noel Walker, was back again from Newera-Eliya at his official house, quite the most beautiful residence in Kandy, and we paid him several visits there, sitting in his lovely garden with a profusion of tropical plants and shrubs. He presented us with a great many Avrogardo pears, which I had learnt to enjoy first in Jamaica, where they are called "Subaltern's Butter"; they are excellent eating for breakfast with pepper and salt.

Rear-Admiral Douglas, recently appointed to the East India station, with his wife and daughter, also his Secretary and Flag-Lieutenant, were staying at the hotel during nearly all the time of our second visit. Mrs. Douglas was unable to do much travelling, as she had an attack of fever on her first arrival at Trincomalee, from which she had only partially recovered; Miss Douglas was, however, very energetic.

The Admiral, with his Flag-Lieutenant, went up to Newera-Eliya to stay a day or two with the Governor, it being the Admiral's first visit to Ceylon since he had assumed command at Bombay earlier in the year.

The Flag-Lieutenant is the son of an old and distinguished friend of mine, General Sir Owen Burne, K.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., whom I had known at the Curragh, in 1866-7, as A.D.C. and Secretary to Lord Strathnairn, with whom he had served through the Indian Mutiny and elsewhere. He was also at Aldershot with me for a short time as Adjutant of the old 20th Regiment after the Crimea in 1856-7.

I am sorry that our time did not allow us to visit Trincomalee, which is on the east coast of the island, but it takes nearly three days overland by bullock-mail, a very hot and fatiguing journey. The alternative route is by coasting steamer, which takes about the same time, and it is sure to be a bad passage. It is by far the most important station in Ceylon now, as it is the local headquarters of the East Indian squadron, having a magnificent natural harbour, well defended by batteries and submarine mines. It is garrisoned by two companies of the infantry regiment, two companies R.A., a company of sappers (fortress) and submarine miners, of which my friend, Major Bowles, R.E., was in command. A railway has been talked of for a long time to connect it with the present line at Matale or Kurunegalle, about one hundred miles; but just before we left, the

Colonial Office decided to make a light railway to Jaffna, which is on the north coast, to improve the communication with India. This leaves "Trinco," as it is usually spoken of, and the east coast out in the cold (metaphorically speaking, as it is always intensely hot), and I don't suppose it will be connected by railway now for years to come. There is, however, good telegraphic and telephonic communication, which keeps the garrison there in touch with Colombo.

The small garrison of Kandy is quartered in very picturesque barracks close to the railway to Matale, and at the foot of a steep hill, on the top of which the General has an official bungalow appropriately named "Mount Airy," which, I believe, he rarely occupies. The road leading to it passes over a level crossing on the Matale railway, and through the courtyard of a Buddhist temple, a queer combination of new and old. The General has also a fine house at Colombo, as well as one rented for him by the Government at Newera-Eliya, so he is well provided for.

Government House is large and airy, and stands in a lovely garden ; but it is an uninteresting building. The official ball on the Queen's birthday is usually given there, and wakes up the place, otherwise it is very quiet, and no one seems to be stirring except a few natives.

The local mounted infantry came out for their training while we were there, and I dined with two members of the

Thomas family at their mess, and heard all the gossip and jokes appertaining to the corps. Their Adjutant was a very active and energetic regular officer, who seemed to have imparted excellent discipline into their ranks. Their turn-out and horses do them great credit, I think, and the young planters deserve the thanks of the community.

We saw "Arabi," the Egyptian exile, more than once, during his daily stroll round the lake. He has sons in the schools, and appears to have a good time of it ; but I suppose he might be a little "home-sick."

On May 12th we had to leave our comfortable quarters and say "good-bye" to our friends, military and others. We travelled down to Colombo by the midday train, finding it hotter and more disagreeable every moment we got nearer the plains. We had a comfortable reserved compartment and a large supply of iced soda-water and sandwiches.

We got back to the Galle Face Hotel, after six weeks' absence, and naturally found the weather hotter and everyone grumbling. I had managed to pick up a bad headache with the hot railway journey, but the fresh sea-breeze through our rooms at night had a very restoring effect, and by complete rest and careful dieting for a day or two, I managed to ward off what might have been a tiresome, feverish attack.

We made the round of several churches in Colombo, to

see the mural tablets erected to my uncle, Charles Sim, who, besides being Surveyor-General of the island, was a hard-working Freemason, and Master of the Sphinx Lodge (Colombo) in the early sixties. We also visited St. Thomas's College, whose principal, Mr. Buck, I have mentioned before as being an old Merchant Taylor boy; and we paid our respects to Bishop Coplestone and his wife at their very pretty house overlooking the lake.

We gave a little dinner-party on the 16th at the hotel to as many R.E.'s as were in Colombo at the time; the party also included an officer R.A., a young sub-Lieutenant R.N., passing through Colombo on his way to the China Station, the son of my old friend, Colonel Jelf, R.E., and last, but not least, the Archdeacon of Colombo. I must say that the viands were as good, if not better, than in many hotels in England, and the wines very fair. The Cingalese are excellent waiters, and the verandahs of the hotel are so cool and pleasant to sit in after dinner while drinking coffee and smoking.

We dined with Sir Frederick Saunders, the Colonial Treasurer, the night before our departure, and met several local magnates. Our total expenses in Ceylon, including hotels, railways, carriages, curios, etc., came to about £195 for three people, during a two months' visit, with a good deal of moving about.

IX.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

AT daylight on May 16th we saw from our windows our old acquaintance, the s.s. *Tamba Maru*, steaming past from the south to enter the harbour, and she had dropped anchor at 8 A.M. Our friend, Captain Barnes, came to the hotel to see us at lunch time, and we talked over our mutual proceedings since we had parted company in the Suez Canal in the previous December. He had been to Singapore, China, and Japan, and had been detained there three months, refitting at Kobe and Yokohama. The winter's cold was intense, and with no steam up, they had no chance of warming the cabins.

However, he was very pleased with the result, and described the steamer as being in beautiful order ; engines working so well and smoothly that her daily record was more than that laid down by "statute." She was a day before her time nearly everywhere. The skipper told us that she was rather full of passengers, several of them Japanese naval officers, and a lot of English children ; this

was rather disquieting news for us, as we hoped to have had a choice of cabins, as on the outward voyage.

The agents for the steamer, Messrs. Carson and Co., were very courteous and polite in all their dealings with us, and placed their boat at our disposal to take us off to the *Tamba*; and they also shipped the huge case, containing our three tricycles, from the Custom House at quite a nominal charge.

We embarked on 18th in the middle of the day; but our steamer was shipping cargo till late in the afternoon, and at the last moment she had to refuse two boat loads from want of room.

We finally began to move about 5 P.M., and had great difficulty in turning in any direction, the harbour being full of steamers and ships from all parts of the world. It is always said in Colombo that the harbour is too small, and it is proposed to extend the breakwaters to keep pace with the increase of trade; but nothing is being done at present.

We succeeded, thanks to the Captain's efforts, in getting fairly good cabins on board; my daughter had a two-berth one opening on to the promenade deck, and my wife and I had one of the large ones at the top of the steps, leading to the saloon. We were rather near some of the children, of whom there were seven on board, and they were a great nuisance the whole way, fighting, and "chivving" each other round the deck, when every one else wanted to sleep, or

read quietly. The only person they were afraid of was the Captain, who occasionally read them lectures ; but on the whole he was too lenient. One family had been brought up in Japan, and another one in the Straits Settlements, and "feared no foe."

We had an uneventful voyage, but an intensely hot one, as we had a following wind the whole of the first week, instead of the south-west monsoon, which ought to have set in, and which every one prophesied that we should suffer from. I nearly always slept on deck, and so had a very good time of it.

The first day out at 12 noon we had made 212 knots in nineteen hours, rather over 11 knots an hour, and after that 12 knots was our average pace, without pressing ; later on in the Red Sea we made over three hundred miles two consecutive days, which was more than we ever did on the outward voyage.

On May 19th, we sighted the high land of India, about Cape Comorin, and in the night of 20th we passed close to the Minikoy Light, only recently erected to mark the passage between the Laccadive and Maldivé Islands. On the 24th we were running along the northern coast of Socotra all day, and also drank Her Majesty's health at dinner in good champagne. On the 25th, we sighted the mountains behind Aden, and next day made our number at Perim Island about mid-day.

We had a good view of the P. & O. s.s. *China*, wrecked on the island about two months before ; we heard of it at Colombo just after our arrival from Rangoon. A more "muffish" transaction never took place in the history of that great Company. In fine weather, in a perfectly lighted channel, past a well-known island, this splendid new steamer, with a large number of passengers, principally Australian, and a very valuable cargo, worth it is said about £200,000, was run on a reef straight in the middle of Perim, fortunately so close to land that the passengers were able to walk ashore by means of the gangways. The baggage and mails were landed all right, but the passengers had a very rough time, camping on Perim until an intermediate P. & O. boat carried them on to Port Said, and the overcrowding and discomfort on board this smaller steamer was the worst part of an unpleasant experience.

When we passed the *China* there were several salvage steamers lying alongside, and they had landed most of her cargo. By immense efforts they succeeded in getting her off the reef in about six months, which must have cost the Company a fabulous sum. The only excuse for the disaster which we heard given was, that at the last moment the Captain altered his mind as to which channel he should take, the narrow one to the east, or the wider one to the west, and at the swift rate the *China* was travelling, he promptly put her in *medias res* on the island. H.M.S. *Orlando*, which

had got as far as Aden on her homeward voyage at the time of the occurrence, went promptly to the rescue. I should hope that this mishap will be a lesson to other P. & O. captains when making this familiar point on the highway to the East.

The weather still continued very hot on our first day in the Red Sea, and we feared it would be worse, but curiously enough the wind shifted to the north, and we had it just pleasantly cool, until we reached Suez, on May 30th. The *Melita*, an English gun-vessel, built and supported by the Government of Malta, accompanied us for the last few hours, she being on her way, I suppose, to join the Mediterranean Fleet to which she is attached.

On arrival at Suez the quarantine examination was very strict. The Egyptian authorities were afraid of the plague in India and China, so they inspected every man, woman, and child on board, and made as many difficulties as possible. However, we eventually got *pratique*, and after a few hours delay, in the outer anchorage, taking in fresh water, arranging the Canal dues, and fitting up our electric search-light at the bows, we shipped our pilot, and entered the Canal about 6 P.M. Port Tewfik, at the entrance, is quite a busy little place, and essentially French ; it is about two miles away from the old town of Suez.

I may add here, that we had splendid views of Mount Sinai, Mount Horeb, and the other giants of the Sinai

Peninsula, as we approached Suez, the changing colours in the clear atmosphere being very beautiful. I may also remark that the navigation of the Red Sea, particularly at night, is not so easy at it looks ; there are several groups of islands, sunken rocks, and shoals totally unlighted, and they all must be given a wide berth. It seems a pity, with all the revenue obtained from the Suez Canal, that the lighting is not improved. Captains complain that they pay for what they do not get, and trade is increasing so enormously, that this route should certainly be made perfectly safe by day or night and in all weathers. I daresay that international complications have something to do with the delay.

We passed Ismailia about 2 A.M. on May 31st, and I sent off a letter by the pilot to our old friend M. Tellier, the French Superintendent of the Canal, who had just been made a C.M.G. for the great assistance he rendered to the naval authorities in getting off H.M.S. *Victoria*, which took the ground at Port Said earlier in the year. I hear that he was very much delighted at receiving the decoration, and we were equally pleased.

We "tied up" about 3 A.M. after leaving Ismailia, to allow three outward bound steamers to pass us, one of them, on her way to the East, being the s.s. *Derbyshire*, which had conveyed us from Rangoon to Colombo in March. I sang out to Captain Harris, who was on the bridge, and he

promptly acknowledged my greeting, rather surprised to hear a friend's voice at that early hour.

It was a lovely morning, and the position of the sun was most favourable for the mirage, so that quite two hours from Port Said we could see the whole town, public buildings, and factory chimneys, all clear of the horizon, but not reversed as in the pictures of the desert mirage. It gave the effect of a town surrounded by a broad sheet of water, whereas the real place is built in a sandy desert.

We made fast to our buoy about 9 A.M., after fifteen hours in the Canal, which was a satisfactory record, as ships are occasionally much longer if the Canal is crowded. It was rather less than six months since we had set foot in Port Said and parted from the *Tamba Maru* on her outward journey in December, 1897. The weather was exceedingly hot, but we had to go on shore to do some business and escape the coaling, and I cannot say it was pleasant.

We had kept ahead of the French mail from China, which was more than a day late, all the way through the Canal, and she made fast at Port Said about three hours after our arrival, and left again soon after us. We thought we saw her several times before we got to the Straits of Messina, but they all proved false alarms, and we found her at Marseilles, having beaten us by half a day.

The European men-of-war, English, French, Russian, and German, were all lying side by side in a friendly way in the

harbour. What position they would take up in the event of an outbreak of hostilities, I fail to see ; I suppose they would all move together into neutral waters.

Coaling is certainly reduced to a science at Port Said ; the rapidity with which it is done, and the comparative quiet, after the native "row" in the Eastern ports, is rather surprising. Fortunes must be, and are, made by the owners of the coal-yards in a short time. The rival "colliers" live in sumptuous palaces, and are stated to be very hospitable. Of course it is an easy place to get to Europe from, so residing there cannot be described as banishment. There is no doubt also that the "morale" of Port Said has been vastly improved lately.

We had originally intended to have "run up" to Jaffa, Jerusalem, Beyrout, and Damascus, but as we were a month behind time, and wanted, if possible, to get home for a little of the London season, we decided to put off our visit to the Holy Land until another occasion. The Mediterranean Fleet was cruising in these parts at that time, and we heard that the jolly tars had a very good time of it.

From all accounts the best season in Palestine is during April and the first part of May, when it is not too hot. There is no difficulty in getting there from Port Said or Alexandria ; but in bad weather it is not always possible to land at Jaffa, owing to the surf, and passengers have to go on to Beyrout, which doubles the length of the overland

journey to Jerusalem, always a tiresome transit. Cook and Son arrange the whole thing, as they have done lately for the Kaiser.

After we dropped our pilot off Port Said, we felt that we were really nearing home. We were again in European waters, and our good ship gliding along at a rapid rate in genial sunny weather. The next day we sighted the mountains in Crete, and plenty of steamers bound in all directions.

On June 3rd, in the afternoon, we were close to the mainland of Italy, near Cape Spartivento, and could see the smoke of the trains on the coast railway. We were lucky enough to go by moonlight through the Straits of Messina, a most romantic spot, and in one part it is so narrow that we could distinguish the electric lights at Reggio and Messina, which are nearly opposite each other. At the latter there was some kind of fête in progress, with fireworks, coloured lights, and showers of rockets, which added much to the brilliance of the scene.

There is a very awkward turn in the channel at the north end of the Straits, where the currents all meet, and even ships with powerful engines are occasionally swept out of their course by the swirl of the waters. This is all in the neighbourhood of Scylla and Charybdis, names of ill-omen to the ancient mariners. There have been several wrecks of late years in this part owing to the defective lighting, so the

Italian Government are erecting a fine new lighthouse on Capo di Faro, or the ancient Pelorum. The work was begun some years ago, and is still far from being completed ; so the old indifferent light has still to do duty, which makes the navigation difficult, and the passengers feel rather "jumpy."

Mount Etna is very plainly visible from the Straits, but it is not an imposing mountain, being too lumpy, and the smoking summit is usually veiled in cloud. Stromboli, a volcano in the Lipari Group, is much more striking in appearance, being a perfect cone rising from the water's edge.

The next day we saw nothing of interest, but our position at noon was very much the latitude of Naples and about a hundred miles west of it.

On June 5th we were energetic enough to be on deck at 4 A.M. to see the Straits of Bonifaccio, and we were well rewarded by witnessing a splendid sunrise just as the moon was setting, and the effect of the rapid transition from moonlight to sunlight was very peculiar. The coast on either side is most rocky and forbidding, and there were no signs of life visible except a few boats out fishing, which made no effort to get out of the ship's way. A leading mark, painted in red and white stripes, marks the end of a dangerous reef where a P. & O. steamer was wrecked with great loss of life in the sixties ; but as there is no light

on it, skippers have to keep a sharp look-out for it at night.

As we were now nearing Marseilles we had to slow down so as to reach our port at daylight on Monday morning, there being no object in our getting in late on Sunday night.

We sighted the magnificent lights off Marseilles about 3 A.M. on June 6th, and soon after daylight picked up our pilot, and it was most interesting to see the way he handled our big ship through the narrow entrances to the docks. They were all full of shipping of every size and nationality, and it was with great difficulty that we found a berth at all ; in fact, we had to drop anchor in the middle of the inner dock to wait the departure of a large vessel, which was just due to start for South America, and was in possession of our berth alongside the wharf.

Cook's agent, in due time, came on board, and we delivered ourselves and baggage to his tender care. I explained to him what tobacco I had, in case of "declaring," the only result being that he or the French *douaniers* "sampled" my cigars, cigarettes, and holders in my travelling bag, leaving me only the cases. They did not bother about curios or other "pretties" in our trunks.

We settled with the agent that we would go by that night's mail to Paris and London. We had paid £25 each for our passages from Ceylon to Marseilles, about twenty days

voyage, and we should have had to pay £9 more going on to London in the steamer, so we considered we had saved something towards paying for our railway tickets, sleeping *coupé*, and baggage, which came to about £10 each through to London. Going this way we saved a good deal of time, if not money, and as it turned out the only bad weather on the *Tamba's* voyage was experienced off the Spanish coast. Our wine and stewards' fees on board were about £7 10s.

We bade farewell to the Captain and our fellow-passengers and drove up to the Terminus Hotel, where we left our hand baggage, before doing some sight-seeing. After a well-served *déjeuner* we chartered an open carriage and drove first to the lift, leading to the church of Notre Dame de la Garde, built in a most commanding position on a promontory jutting out into the harbour. There is a glorious view from it of sea and land, and we could see many men-of-war, apparently in commission, lying in the outer harbour; everything looked brilliant and lively in the bright sunshine. The church itself is interesting on account of the large number of votive offerings it contains from seafaring men and their relatives.

The lift is of the same pattern as the "cliff railways" in England, but the gradient may be rather steeper. After descending by it we drove out along the Corniche Road, a part of the great high road to Italy, visited the public park, and came home by a road on the seashore, and were blocked

several times in trying to get along the busy wharves round the inner harbour.

We dined early, and were conducted to the station by Cook's agent, who saw that they had given us our *coupé-lit* all right, and at 8 P.M. we were off to Paris, which we reached at 9 A.M. next morning. It was fairly smooth travelling, but we had a great scramble to get our early *café au lait* at Montargis, as we got there before we expected, so we had to make a very hurried toilette, and run to the buffet, which was the far end of the station.

We took the *ceinture* train round Paris to the Gare du Nord, and there had time for *déjeuner* before the departure of the boat train at 11.50 A.M. The train was rather crowded, being just after the "Grand Prix," but as we were in good time we got comfortable seats for the very shaky journey to Calais.

We had a rapid crossing of eighty minutes, in perfect weather, and much appreciated English tea and buns at Dover Pier. We reached Victoria at 7.45 P.M., where we were met by our nearest relatives, to welcome us after an absence of six months and two weeks. We were soon established again in our flat, and, after a good night's rest, it was difficult to realise that we had ever been away.

We had carried out our original programme, with the exception of seeing the Holy Land, and we visited Burma instead of staying in Java, as we had intended, so we were

very well satisfied with the enjoyment and interest afforded by our latest trip.

Many changes have taken place since our return. Khartoum has been re-taken, the Khalifa quashed, and Egyptian rule restored on the upper Nile ; Sir Herbert Kitchener has become Lord Kitchener, and I was one of the dense crowd of his countrymen and women to greet him on his arrival in the Metropolis. I was present when the sword of honour was presented to him at the Guildhall, and he looked just as modest and soldier-like as when we visited him at Assouan last December.

Many of our friends in Egypt have returned, and several are honoured in the *Gazette*, and I met most of them at our banquet to the Sirdar at the Junior United Service Club on November 25th, which was just a year, less one day, from the time we set out on our second series of travels. I feel that wherever the British flag is floating in the Far East, it is more respected than ever, and that, as heretofore, "Britannia rules the waves," and long may she do so.

